The Trail a Boy Travels

AND OTHER STORIES

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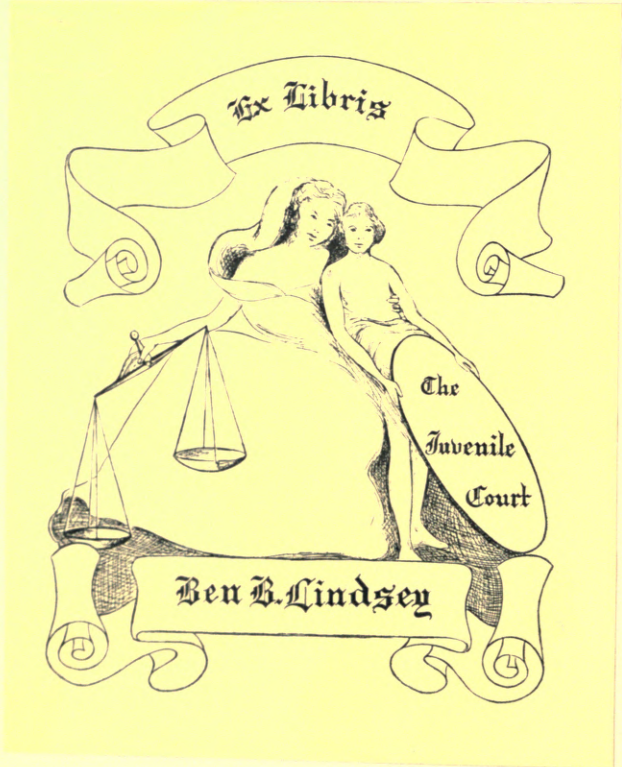
HERVEY SMITH McCOWAN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THE TRAIL A BOY TRAVELS

AND OTHER STORIES

" The men seemed more boyish than the boys themselves "

THE TRAIL A BOY TRAVELS

And Other Stories

BY
HERVEY SMITH McCOWAN

Association Press
NEW YORK: 124 EAST 28TH STREET
LONDON: 47 PATERNOSTER ROW, E.C.
1916

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THE TRAIL A BOY TRAVELS

THE TRAIL A BOY TRAVELS

MY friend and I had been brought up in the same town. We knew each other as boys know boys. He came of a fine family, and his training was everything one could wish. But he grew wild without apparent reason. His friends were alarmed. They talked with him without effect, and he went his own way, which seemed to us to be down hill, with the hill greased to the bottom. But suddenly he stopped and came back. He finished his education and went into business. I entered the professions and we saw nothing of each other for many a day, but I knew of his achievements. He climbed higher and higher in business enterprise until at forty he was among those at the top, and when the Government made its investigations it found no stain on his name or in his affairs.

I had not seen him for many years, until one morning as the train sped across the plains of Colorado, I met him in the aisle of a Pullman. He had changed little. He had grown stouter, perhaps, and gray hair showed at the temples.

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He was going to look over a branch line in which his company had an interest, and he asked me to go with him. For a week we were together, watching the grading crews, the mule skinners, the steam shovels and the track layers; or we explored the country, examining the land and water, estimating their productive value for settlers who were to feed the road with freight and passengers in the years to come; or we took a car and followed the staked survey for a hundred miles, and when we were hungry we ate of the plain, but delicious, fare of roast and potatoes and gravy and canned tomatoes and corn, with prunes or dried peaches for dessert. We drank coffee as black as tar, and almost as thick. At night we slept at the camp, in box cars, or on the open range with a lariat rope circled around us to ward off the snakes. Sometimes we would lie for hours watching the stars, which hung so low that we could almost touch them with our fingers, and the "man in the moon" swooped down and smiled at us in his friendly way, as he does sometimes on the plains and the deserts. At other times we talked of old days and old scenes and old friends at home. It was on our last night out that he told me this story. The experiences of manhood had been swept away and all the years forgotten. We talked as we had talked when

boys with life before us. It grew late. The moon was low in the west and we were about to go to sleep, when he turned to me and said: "Mac, there is one phase of my life that I have never told, but I would like to tell you, because you lecture and write; and if the occasion should come when you can use it, I should be glad to have you do so for the good it may do, but I wish you would not use my name."

THE STORY

He lay still, thinking, for many minutes, and then said: "You remember when I was a boy I got started wrong. As I look back upon those days I am frightened cold. I don't understand them. Some perverse spirit within me rebelled against advice, or good influence, or warning. I wanted freedom to do as I pleased, to go where I pleased, and to choose the friends I pleased. Restraint angered me, criticism from good people aroused my bitterest resentment, and I turned my face from everything wholesome and started on the road to destruction.

"At first I was in the frame of mind where I would 'try anything once,' and having tried it once, would try it again if it pleased me. I didn't understand the mood then, and I don't now. No one understands a boy at that period, from fourteen to eighteen. He doesn't under-

stand himself. Yet it is the most crucial period of our lives.

We have no anchor.
We have no moorings.
We have no standard of judgment.
We have no established characters.
Novelties appeal.
Temptations tempt.
Crimes call.
Sins seduce.
Appetites hunger.
Thirsts crave.
Passions boil.

"All in a caldron together they seethe in the boy who is not man enough yet to see where they lead or what they will do to his life. And, worst of all, at that period there are mysteries of physical change within him which make him secret in his thoughts and acts. The new things he learns he wants to learn alone or with his boon companions—and who are his companions? This is the great question of the boy's world.

THE CIGARETTE

"I can remember as if it were yesterday the first cigarette. I had watched older boys, with the flourish and pride of the beginner, roll a cigarette, place it between their lips, take a

match, scratch it on their pants, and light up. It appeared like an achievement to be envied, but in my career I had not got quite to it, until one night my chum and I were going to town, and he pulled a sack of tobacco and package of paper from his pocket and winked at me. We didn't go into town. We turned into his father's barn. With a good deal of trouble we rolled two cigarettes, lighted them and began to smoke. It was not pleasant, and only vanity made us continue. When our cigarettes were half consumed, someone near the house either saw the light or smelled the smoke, and started for the barn. We heard steps, threw our cigarettes away, ran out of the barn and down the alley, and started for town. We had hardly got to the main street when the fire bell rang. We followed the engine and found the barn in flames. They saved the carriage horse, but everything else was destroyed.

"That frightened us and I think prevented my smoking cigarettes, and to this day I never see one, or smell the odor, that I do not think of the night we burned up a thousand dollars' worth of property for my friend's father. Afterwards the old man lost all he had and died. The boy got wild and the widow was very poor. When I began to prosper I sent her the money with interest. She never knew where it

came from, but with it she started a little bakery and made a living and more. I have told you this to show how boys do things in secret. It is strange that at that age we do those things that we dare not boast of among good people.

THE LIE

"The druggist told someone about George's buying cigarette tobacco at his store. George's father learned of it and questioned George. He denied it. His father came to mine and told him we were together that night. My father called me into his office after school and talked to me. I acknowledged that we were together, but lied to him about the smoking. He believed me because I had always been truthful. It had been my one redeeming trait; up to that time I would tell the truth, no matter what calamity might follow.

"I had a fine father. He had lived in the community a long time and had lived so clean that he had won a reputation for probity and honor. I had often heard him say, 'No man is lost until he becomes a liar.' Remorse over my other deeds had not bothered me much, but this lie lay on my conscience. I went to George and begged him to tell his father all about it and let me tell mine, but he refused. He was

afraid of the punishment. He swore me to silence, and my father never knew. I would have told him in later years, but that I feared he would pay the loss, and I wanted to do it myself. But when I had left home and was in business, one day I received a wire that my father was very sick. I took the first train. I wanted to see him while he was still conscious and confess to him about that lie. But I was too late. He never knew.

THE OATH

"When a boy has been brought up right he does not do wrong naturally. It is an effort for him at first. Something restrains him, and when with evil companions he dodges and avoids actual evil until some occasion draws him in. I remember how I felt about swearing. Although I had companions who often used profanity, it shocked me when I heard it and I tried to avoid its use. But when the occasion came, the vocabulary had become so familiar to me from my associates that I swore like a pirate robbed of his gold.

"The boys of my age used to box sometimes after school in the rear of a livery barn. It was great sport, fine exercise, and was good for us; but there was a 'bully' around the barn

who used to make us put on the gloves with him. He was much taller and heavier than we and had long arms and could reach us before we could get near him. All of us had been beaten up by him. We had discussed him and what we would do with him a good many times, but had not quite come to a conclusion when the explosion came. We had met at the barn on a Tuesday afternoon, and were pulling our coats when the bully showed up. 'Hello there, Bud,' he said to me. 'I've got just ten minutes to put a black eye on you.'

" 'I'm not going to box with you,' I said. 'You are not my size.'

" 'You will never be a man till you lick a man; put on the gloves,' he said.

" 'I'll box anyone of my weight or size,' I came back at him, 'but I'm not going to take a black eye just to please a bully.'

" 'A bully, is it!' he said and grabbed me. He got his hands into my hair and threw me on the barn floor. I jumped up and swore at him as naturally as if I'd been swearing all of my life. The whole vocabulary of profanity came to me as if I had been trained to it. The bully ran at me again. I dodged and snatched up a stone and warned him not to touch me. He didn't stop and I threw the rock straight into the pit of his stomach. He turned snow

white and doubled up. Someone sent for a doctor and we boys faded away. I was not sure I had not killed him, but that was not what frightened me. It was the memory of my profanity which terrified me. All night I could not sleep. I expected God to strike the house with lightning and destroy us all. I prayed 'without ceasing' that night, if I never did again, and was astonished to find the sun shining on a live family on the morning of another day. For a few days the doctor feared the bully might die. Somehow his condition did not terrify me, but it was a long time before I could think of that profanity without feeling cold with fear.

THE GAME

"One wrong leads to another so easily that a boy soon has a bouquet of evil deeds to his credit, and conditions smooth the way for him. That was true with me.

"My mother was called to see a sick sister, and while she was gone I was invited to spend an evening with some neighbor boys. Their father and mother had gone to a lodge banquet. We were left to our own devices for amusement. The boys suggested a game of cards. I knew the cards, but not much about

the game. They showed me and I won several times. They suggested that we put up a little money to make the game interesting. I hesitated at first. I didn't have much money, but my father had insisted on my carrying some always, so that I might learn to take care of money without spending it, and as a precaution against being without money in any emergency, but I never carried much.

"Finally I consented and we bet small amounts. At first I won and got the gambler's fever. Then I lost, then won again. Then I began to lose and continued to lose until my money was gone.

"The boys hurrahed me and laughed at me, and yet it did not occur to me that they had 'framed it all up' to clean my pockets.

"I wanted to win that money back. My father, like a prudent man, had a habit of calling for an accounting occasionally. He was not unreasonably strict, but in a general way knew how much I was spending and what I spent it for.

"One of the boys offered to lend me a dollar to play with. I took it and we began over. It was the old story. They soon had that dollar, too, and I was in debt. I had never owed a dollar before. My father had warned me against debts of every kind.

THE SONG AND STORY

"The boys became hilarious over their winnings and the successful trap they had laid for me. I became reckless over my loss. We sang songs and told stories. At first they were such songs as we might have sung in a school crowd. Then they became tainted and vulgar.

"Stories followed. They, too, were all right at first; then they became coarse and coarser until they were nauseous, and when I went home that night I felt stained and soiled and filthy.

THE THIEF

"But the end was not yet. I didn't know how to get the money to pay the gambling debt. Soon the boy from whom I had borrowed asked me for it. I told him I would have it within a few days. I didn't get it. He asked me again. One of his friends said a boy who would not pay a 'debt of honor' like that was a crook. I promptly knocked him down. The boy from whom I borrowed threatened that if I did not get it for him that week he would go to father and tell him that I owed him a dollar for a gambling debt.

"The next temptation came like bread to a hungry man. I left the boys on the street and went to father's office. Father was out, but on

his desk were four dollars and a note from the gentleman who had left them, saying he was leaving three dollars to 'apply on account.' There was the money; the one dollar I needed, and not a person could know. I picked up the dollar and put it in my pocket, then I took it out and looked at it. A hot flush passed through my whole body, and I said: 'Well, Frank, you are a thief—just a common thief.'

"I went over to the desk and laid the money back with its mates.

"Father came in later and I drew his attention to the mistake. He looked at me with a pleased smile and said: 'So it is; I will mail the dollar back.' On my way home that night I had a mixed feeling of fear and pleasure.

"There were some carpenters building a house on our street. I watched them and finally inquired if they could use a boy after school hours. They asked if I could lath.

" 'Well,' I replied, 'I can learn.'

" 'We need some help in lathing,' they said.

"I watched the lather awhile and then picked up a lathing hatchet and laid a few laths slowly. Soon I learned to carry the nails in my mouth and turn them with my tongue so that they would come with the right end to my fingers. I learned to send the nail with a tap and a drive into the head, and with one stroke to

trim a lath as if it had been shaved with a chisel, and to remember to break joints every eighth lath.

"Well, by the end of the week I had paid my debt and had change in my pocket. That experience sobered me a little, but not enough to make me break with my associates and start over.

THE DRINK

"The next year the boys in the High School had a football team. I belonged to it. We played all the schools of our size in our part of the state and hadn't lost a game. We were invited to play the city team. We trained hard. We dieted and kept better hours at night. We were in prime condition, and expected to win that game. We had had new banners made and a new song of triumph written to be sung on the way home. We never had a doubt, but they beat us.

"I never shall forget the humiliation of that defeat and of what followed. When we went to the gymnasium to dress after the game we were bruised and sore in body, and our pride was wounded to the core. The captain and quarterback threw their arms around each other and cried like children. I think the rest of us did the same. And as misfortune would have it,

our train for home was three hours late, so that instead of returning at eight o'clock, we did not return until eleven. The boys of the team we had played wanted to entertain us. After supper we sat in the lobby of the hotel and discussed the important plays. Then some one suggested a game of cards upstairs. We went up and played for an hour, when one of our boys came in. He had been drinking. He was a boy who had never touched liquor before. He produced a bottle and passed it around. Most of the boys at first let it go by without drinking. But those who had taken some seemed to forget their troubles and became funny and begged us to drink and forget. Some of the boys refused, but I didn't, and soon my wounded pride over the defeat was drowned in reckless happiness.

"About ten o'clock one of the city boys suggested that 'we take in the town,' but as we were about to go out, our teacher, who had come with us, but who had been invited to a friend's house, returned. He understood the situation at once. He took us in hand and prevented a worse disgrace from falling upon us.

"That was the first drink, but it was not the last for some of us, and our imaginations had been aroused for other things.

"That winter, as I look back upon it, has been a nightmare to me for twenty-five years.

We danced down the line of reckless delight, doing those things which certain men did, striving to be men, but not gentlemen. We broke our parents' hearts by the dance we led, and some of us danced over the line and never came back. My own salvation from a life of shame was a miracle, and in it I find the only reason for telling you this story.

THE STRANGE WOMAN

"From the day of our football defeat we boys had thought of the invitation to 'take in the town.' The lost game was forgotten after awhile, but that invitation was not forgotten. At first we spoke of it when several were together. Then George and I talked of it and planned to go, but always I had a feeling, which grew stronger as I dwelt upon it, that if I should go I wanted to go alone. Circumstances often adjust themselves to lend convenience to evil deeds. They did for me.

"My mother had been called again to see her sick sister. She wrote father when she expected to return and he planned to meet her in the city. Some business demanded his presence at home, and he asked if I could go in his stead. He wrote out instructions and told me carefully what to do, and said while waiting for the train I might go to the opera.

"That seemed the opportunity I had been waiting for. My imagination was excited and it became more so as the train approached the city. Fortunately it was yet light when we arrived. I started for a café to get supper when I met Tom Holland, one of the city football boys. He had been one who had not drunk anything the night of the game. He was a fine, straight, clean-cut boy with a strong face and clear eye. He recognized me at once and seemed glad to see me. He asked what I was doing in the city. I told him.

" 'Oh, that's jolly,' he said. 'You have lots of time and can go with me. There is to be "A Father and Son" dinner at the Young Men's Christian Association. We shall be just in time.'

"I tried to avoid it, and told him that I was going to the opera.

" 'You will have plenty of time after dinner,' he exclaimed. 'You won't have to stay for the speaking, but the funniest man in town is to be there, and the United States Prosecuting Attorney and the most brilliant preacher we have. It would be too bad to miss them, but if you think you can't stay you can leave after the refreshments. It's a new thing and has stirred up the town. We have planned to have one thousand men and boys. Come on. It's an

event and you will see the biggest people in the city.'

"His enthusiasm was contagious, and he had thrown a veil over my evil imagination. He hailed a car and within a few minutes we were in the cloakroom of the Association building, where we left our overcoats and hats. So the Strange Woman had to wait.

THE MIRACLE

"Tom's father was waiting for us, and we went into the banquet hall. We had splendid seats, and while we waited we had time to watch the crowd. It was a scene I have never forgotten: fathers and sons sat side by side. At first the significance of it did not appear to me. Then I noticed a distinguished-looking man, and when I looked at his son I saw that all the features of the father were in the boy, and what the father was the boy ought to become. I pointed it out to Tom and asked who the gentleman was. He was the editor of a prominent daily paper. I had heard of him all my life as one of the most influential men in the state.

"We began to compare other fathers and sons, and we saw in many the same striking resemblance. It was a remarkable assemblage. I had never seen so many strong, clean men

together, and I wished that my father were there with me. Then I remembered how many times people had told me that I was the picture of him. A warm glow filled my heart as I thought of him, and I said, 'There is not a finer man in this hall, nor in this city, nor in the state either, than my own father,' and for the first time I began to see him as he was.

"The chairman called us to order. Some one offered prayer and we began our supper. It was not a royal banquet. It was a simple evening meal, such as we might have had at home. Men and boys joked and laughed and ate and enjoyed it. The men seemed more boyish than the boys themselves, which was a surprise to the boys.

"We were hardly through when the chairman announced 'a quartet of Daughters and Sisters will sing to the Fathers and Brothers.' The girls came in dressed in gingham with their hair hanging in two braids, pulled over their shoulders. This had been a surprise of the program committee. They sang home songs and were called back over and over. One of them was Tom's sister, whom I came to know better.

"The funny man spoke and convulsed us with mirth, though I do not remember much of his address.

"The address I do remember was that of the

Prosecuting Attorney. His subject was: 'My Boys in the Penitentiary, or How Men Become Criminals.' He did not tell us anything about the method of the Government in catching and convicting criminals. He told us the stories of men who had been convicted and what they had confessed to him, either before or after conviction.

"The beginning of each career was much like the others. They began first on the street at night with evil associates, then cigarettes, profanity, drinking, gambling, lying, and immoral women. As he told story after story of men whose lives and opportunities had been lost behind prison bars, it seemed to me that he was talking to me. All the wild things I had done and thought were what the criminals had done and thought at the beginning of their careers of crime. I was appalled and I saw the path I had been traveling as I had never seen it before.

"When the speaker had finished there was no applause. We were too deeply stirred for expression. Many eyes were wet, and what followed opened the flood gates.

"The chairman announced 'a chorus of Wives and Mothers will sing to the Husbands and Sons.'

"They came in, dressed in long-sleeved calico

kitchen aprons over their gowns, and sang, 'Throw Out the Life Line;' that was enough to melt us. Then someone called for 'Where Is My Wandering Boy To-night?'

"That broke us up. I believe there was not a dry eye in the house and many sobbed outright. The singers themselves broke down and left the room.

"That was the climax. After we had recovered a little a young minister spoke on the subject, 'The Footprints of the Father.' He was a wonderful speaker, but I remember most distinctly the story he told, which was afterward used by Sam Jones.

"A certain man had said that he could live without God; that he was sufficient unto himself, and would live and do as he pleased within the law of the land. He followed his declaration in practice. He smoked what he pleased and as much as he pleased; he drank beer, then whiskey, then alcohol; he swore often; he gambled much; he scoffed at God and religion, and there were stories of wild orgies in the city when he shipped his fat stock there; and with it all he seemed to prosper in business.

"One winter day a drifting storm blew. He came in late and found the snow banked along the path from the house to the barn. He went in and put on dry clothes and started to the

barn to feed. When half way he heard someone behind him, and, looking back, he saw his little boy taking great strides, trying to step in the tracks of his father.

" 'Better run back, sonny; the snow is too deep for you,' he said.

"The child replied: 'I can do it all right, papa, because I am stepping in your tracks, and if I step in your tracks every time, I'll go just where you do, won't I? And when I am a big man I can step as far as you can and we will go everywhere together, and when you go to Chicago I can go with you, can't I? When I am a man I want to do just what my papa does.'

"When they were back in the house and the child was in bed he told his wife about it, and he said to her, 'Annie, I've been an old fool. I'm not big enough to live without a God and I need one mighty bad. From now on if you and He will help me I am going to walk so straight that Billy can follow my steps with pride, and I am going to begin now.' They knelt right there at the old lounge and talked it over with the Almighty.

"We were dismissed and went down stairs. I still had three hours before my mother's train would arrive; time enough to 'take in the town,' but that part of the town no longer had any

attraction. The Strange Woman had become a beast of the jungle to me.

"Tom took me through that wonderful building and showed me the gymnasium and reading room and games and the night class department, where working men came to get an education, which they could not get by daylight. It was a revelation. Then we saw a group of men and boys in one end of the reception hall. We went over and listened. Nearly every man had a funny story, and not one of them tainted. They were sweet and wholesome, and the funniest stories I had ever heard. This was a new experience also. Whenever I had heard stories before among the set I trained with, someone would bring in something vulgar. About eleven o'clock the men began to go home. One of them stopped us and said: 'Boys, isn't it fine that we can meet in a place like this and be sure that no one will introduce a story that will make us ashamed that we heard it? It is an insult to a man's intelligence when anyone offers to entertain him with the most nauseous vulgarity of his evil mind. If those men who insist upon regaling me with their coarse stories should invite me to their orchard, would they offer me decayed fruit to eat? If they should ask me to dine, would they give me spoiled vegetables and

tainted meat? If they have too much courtesy to feed my body with such foods, why should they feed my mind with what is worse?'

"For years I remembered those delicious stories. One of them I remember yet, and I have laughed over it for twenty-five years. No doubt you have heard it; about the negro and the 'hant.' It's an old one."

"I don't recall it," I said.

"Well," he went on, "there was a darkey named Jim, who boasted that he wasn't afraid of no 'hant' what growed, 'case dey wasn't none what 'growed,' an' if any 'hant' bodder him he gwine bus' his face wide open.

"Now, there was a vacant house between town and Jim's cabin where an old man had been murdered. All the negroes believed the house was haunted, and they never went by it at night when they could go any other way. Jim was just as frightened of that house as any of them, but in daylight he always boasted of what he was going to do with the 'hant' if he 'met up with him.'

"Well, one night Jim was kept late in town. When he approached the haunted house his eyes got big and white and his knees got weak. He tried not to run, but he was scared in his heels and his feet ran off with him. Just as he passed the gate the 'hant' stepped out of the

door of the house and said, 'Howdy, Brother Jim!'

"Jim never replied to the greeting. He just caught his breath and took down the road and the ghost took after him. Jim looked back and saw the ghost coming. He let out a whoop of terror and increased his speed. When he looked again the ghost was gaining. The next time the ghost was at his heels reaching out his hand for Jim's shoulder. Jim mended his licks until he got near home. He looked again, but the 'hant' was so close he didn't dare turn in at his own gate and down the hill he started. He stumbled over a log and fell thirty or forty feet. He rolled over and over, but he saw the 'hant' coming. Jim didn't stop; he just landed on his feet a-running. He came to a rail fence and went over without touching a rail. He looked again and saw the 'hant' at his heels. He came to a hedge and went through it like a rabbit. He heard the 'hant' laugh close to his ear. Jim put on more steam until he came to the bank of the 'branch.' He tried to jump it, but fell into the middle of the pool. He scrambled out on the other side, still a-going, the 'hant' at his elbow.

"Jim was getting winded, but his heels were willing.

"He made another mile, then finally out of

breath he sat down on the end of a log. He looked around and saw the 'hant' sitting on the other end.

"Jim's eyes rolled, but he couldn't go any farther. Suddenly the ghost hitched along the log and came a foot closer. Jim jumped, but settled back. He kept his eye on the ghost. The ghost hitched another foot along the log. Jim's nerves jerked and the white of his eyes bulged, but he couldn't get to his feet. He was panting like a dog in July. Finally the ghost hitched up close to Jim's side and laid his hand on his shoulder and said: 'Jim, that was a great race we had, wasn't it?'

" 'Yas, sah, yas, sah,' panted Jim, 'dat was a great race. Yas, sah, but 'taint nothin' t'whut we gwine to hev soon's I git ma bref,' and with that Jim hit the road with the ghost blowing his hot breath on the back of his black neck. Oh, those delicious stories!

THE HOME

"It was still a long time before my mother's train would come. Tom's father invited me to go home with them. I went gladly, for it seemed to me there was no other place in the city that I could go.

"When we arrived at the house, Olive, Tom's sister, met us at the door. His mother wel-

comed me, too. We sang and played games, until Mrs. Holland went to the kitchen and cooked molasses for taffy. We pulled it and twisted it and laid it out in the cold, then broke it and ate it; and somehow I was always close to Olive, who was sweeter than a flower, even then.

"When the time came for me to meet my mother's train, Tom said: 'Come on, Olive, let us go with him. We know the city and they don't.' Olive looked at her mother, who smiled and gave her consent. When we were ready to leave, Mr. and Mrs. Holland shook hands with me, then bade me good-by and invited me to come again. Mr. Holland held my hand a long while and looked straight into my eyes and said: 'Frank, I'm glad you could be with us at the Young Men's Christian Association tonight. I wish your father could have been there, too. I have known of him for a good many years, and there is not a man in this state who has a cleaner reputation than your father. Tell him to come to see us when he is in the city. You have a father to be proud of, and I hope you will grow to be such a man as will make him proud of you.'

"He looked at me searchingly, still holding my hand, then continued: 'Son, when you come to this city, or any other, go to the Young Men's

Christian Association to find your pleasure. It will help your reputation, make a better boy of you, keep you out of temptation and you will meet friends there you will want to cultivate all your life. It is the only institution I know of which has been organized for the comfort and benefit of young men. It is maintained by voluntary subscriptions at an expense of many millions of dollars. Its purpose and motives are all good. No man has ever been injured by the influences of a Young Men's Christian Association. I wish we had a picture of the young men and their fathers who were drawn to the Association tonight, and then another of the young men and old men who were drawn to other resorts of the city. There are many that are not harmful, but there would be scenes which would make you shudder and would break many a father's and mother's heart.'

"We ran out to catch the car, and when my mother stepped off the train I introduced her to my new friends. They put us into a carriage for the other depot where we were to take our train for home and we bade them good night.

THE MOTHER

"I shall never forget the ride across the city and the hour's ride from the city to our town. When she stepped off the train Mother's face

had been troubled, but when we were alone and I told her of the whole evening she was happier than I had seen her for many months. She took my hand in hers and pulled it into her muff and we sat that way until our station was called. Father and my sister met us and we went home together a happy quartet.

"That night I did not sleep. I lay awake thinking of my old habits, and for the first time I saw where they were leading me. Then I saw again the scene at the Fathers' and Sons' Banquet—the Young Men's Christian Association had a new meaning. It seemed to be a haven and harbor for young men, and the thought of it and its influence filled my heart with tenderness.

"Then I remembered the Holland home and family, and I said: 'They are fine people. Yes, they are fine people, but they are no better than my own people. Mr. Holland is no better man than my own father. Mrs. Holland is no finer woman than my own mother. They hope for no more from Tom than my parents have hoped for from me. I have as good a chance to make a man of myself as Tom has, and I am going to take that chance from tonight.'

"Right there I heard the door open softly. My mother came in. She thought I was sleeping. She knelt by my bed to pray for me. I

reached over and put my hand on her hair and said: 'Mother, your prayers for me are all answered.'

"She threw her arms over my shoulder and buried her face in the pillow beside mine and cried from pure joy, as if her heart would break. 'Oh, Frank,' she sobbed, 'the Lord has been kind to me tonight, and now whenever He wants to take me from you I shall die happy.' She had been breaking fast from worry over me. But from that time she grew stronger and happier and prettier, and now she is the sweetest old lady in the land.

THE SCHOOL

"That was the beginning of new days for me. Everything was changed. Even the town was different. Since I had been running with fast companions I had learned to hate the town where I had been born and raised. I felt that every decent man and woman was my enemy, but when I arose that first morning after my visit to the city the whole town seemed to be pleased at my return.

"The school, too, was changed. I could see the belfry in the distance. I knew the hidden outline of the massive building and suddenly it seemed to me a great factory which works with minds as other factories work with matter;

sometimes turning out a simple product because the material is inferior; sometimes producing something very common, but strong and useful; sometimes building something rugged and ponderous which can carry great loads without weariness; sometimes evolving something fine and splendid and dominant; which can lead the crusades for great ideas in times of peace and of war; and sometimes, sometimes—but very rarely—molding a Master Mind, so delicate and sensitive and luminous that it measures the march of mankind with God, as the watch in my pocket measures the time of the stars swinging in the firmament. And I wondered as I walked to school what quality of mind I was taking to the molding room.

"I saw these things as through a mist on that morning of my boyhood. They came to me clearly only after the lapse of years, and it was many a day before I learned that education does not consist in the gathering of knowledge, but in drinking wisdom from the knowledge we have gathered.

THE CHURCH

"When Sunday came I went to church gladly and when the service was over I entered the boys' class with a feeling I had not had for many months and that evening I went with my

sister to the young people's meeting and then to evening service and I began to see the Church as I had never seen it before. I saw how it had stood for the highest moral character and the loftiest conception of life. I saw how it had harbored love and protected the home and had led men and nations to God. I saw how it had been beaten and broken and almost destroyed by the ruthless passions of men: but when the passions had spent themselves and the storm had passed, the Church had been the shrine where men had come in search of something which is stronger than man. And so the weeks went by. My life was greatly changed, but there was something within me which was not satisfied.

"But one Sunday morning the sermon was preached from that wonderful, wonderful verse: 'For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.'

"And for the first time I began to see what the love of God could mean. I saw that His love is the light of the whole world. I saw that He just loves and loves and loves, like a mother, until He melts the heart. He never stops loving. He follows us through all the dark ways. He sees us sin, but He loves us. He sees us fall, but He

loves us. He sees us break the laws of the land and go to the prison cell, but no bars can lock Him out; He follows and goes with us and loves us. He sees us waste our talents and intelligence, still He loves us. He sees us become wrecks of manhood with the image of God almost effaced, but He stands by and waits and loves us. And some day he finds us tired and sick of all the things we have prized and fought for, which have failed us and we say: 'Oh, we would give everything in the world to be children again with some one to love us and tuck us in'; and then we think of the old home of our childhood and we see Mother flitting from room to room and we see her smile and hear her voice in laughter and song and we know all the tender things she ever did and then we remember the prayers she taught us: 'Now I lay me down to sleep,' 'Our Father who art in heaven.'

"Then we wonder where God is and if He would love us if we should pray. We try, and then—and then, He takes us up in his arms and says: 'Why, you are my sons. I have loved you all the way and I am going to love you even unto the end of the world and beyond,' and He holds us close as a father holds the son he loves and we feel that we are being rocked in the arms of the Almighty and that we are riding

the tides of eternity which carry us up to the very throne of God.

"Right there the scenes of my own little life came before me and I saw how God had followed me and loved me and how, when I was close to the rapids of evil, He turned me aside and lured me into the home of Christian friends. The tears filled my eyes and ran down my cheeks and in that moment I wanted to find God and get close to Him. I didn't know how. But there was one I did know who had never failed me. I reached down on the seat between us and got hold of Mother's hand and squeezed it. She understood as mothers do. She didn't turn to look at me, but clasped my hand tightly in hers and I knew that God was not far away, for it is the love of the mother which is most like the love of the Good God, and we learn to see Him through her. Her love follows us too, even down to the end of the world and beyond as long as her soul shall live.

"Well, when we had gotten away from the church and were going up the lane toward our house, father and my sister were ahead and I turned to Mother and said: 'Mother, I have to find God if He is such a God as the Bible tells us He is. I can't live without Him.'

"Mother turned to me with her rare smile and said: 'Frank, the half has never been told in

the Bible or out of it. You must live close to Him and trust Him if you would know what a wonderful Father He is, and the easy way is to know Jesus.'

"And so I found God," said the great man, simply.

He stopped and we lay looking into the heavens for many minutes, then he continued:

"The way of my life has led me into large affairs and with others we have accomplished many things, but my great achievement was fulfilled on that Sunday afternoon when I went with Mother to her room and we prayed until I found God. All of my other possessions will pass away. But God will not pass away. Everything else will vanish, but God will not vanish. To find God: that is the greatest thing in the world. No man ever does anything greater than that."

I thought that was the end, but after a long silence he continued:

THE GIRL

"My association with Tom at college drew our families close together, for Tom and I went together and roomed together for four years. During our vacations we had Tom out home and he had me in the city, and I came to know Olive well. She grew up and put on the airs

"One night we stood under the walnut tree by the fountain"

of a young lady, enveloped in the atmosphere of contradictions and mysteries. She became prettier every day, and sweeter too. She was much sought for and many men would have given any price to win her. She taunted me by treating me as a brother, and sometimes called me 'Brother Frank.' While in college I worried lest I should lose her. She scolded me if I did not write, but her answers were always late. When she seemed farthest from me, I was comforted by the memory of the girl in the gingham dress with the brown curls hanging down her back—the girl with the haunting eyes, whose laughter was pure music.

"She broke my heart a hundred times, but mended it again, yet she evaded me, until one night we stood under the walnut tree by the fountain in her father's yard. I had given up, and held out my hand and said: 'Good-by, Olive; I am not coming again. I have tried for ten years to win you, but I have failed. Good-by.'

"She stepped up very close to me and put one arm around my neck. 'You dear old Mr. Blind Man,' she whispered in my ear, 'I have loved you every minute since we pulled candy together in my mother's kitchen.'

"That was twenty years ago. Our lives have been filled with sunshine and shadow. We have

a boy and a girl to gladden our home, but there is a long shadow from a little headstone in the cemetery where a baby girl lies.

"But my life has been blessed, because one night the Young Men's Christian Association caught me off the street and changed my path forever. It opened to me my business career. It led me to Olive and the happy home which she has blessed. It brought me to the Church, and through it I have found God and Jesus Christ whom He has sent. To this day, when I look back to that night and the 'parting of the ways,' I shiver with fear as I wonder what would have been my destiny if I had not caught the Life Line for boys, which has pulled so many ashore.

"And this is my message to the boy:

To find God.

To be a friendly chum with Jesus.

To pray often.

To know the truth.

To live clean.

To learn honor.

To love his father.

To adore his mother.

To make a clean record each day from breakfast to bedtime, so that the mother who loves him may kneel by his bed each night and read the page with a glad joy and thank the good

Lord for the man child she carried under her heart and gave to the world.

And when temptations come, to stop and fix her image in his mind and repeat 'Break Not Thy Mother's Heart!' "

THE LETTER HE WAS ASHAMED OF

THE LETTER HE WAS ASHAMED OF

I WORK for Mr. King, a leader of men. He is Sales Manager for a great corporation. He has more than a thousand salesmen traveling over the world, and he knows them as a mother knows her babies. He knows them in the mass, and he knows them as individuals. He knows their habits and manners. He knows their strength and weakness, and he seems to know by instinct how to fit them into the field they have to cover. And yet he does not see them often; some of them he has never seen. They are roaming over all the earth, beating up the jungles of trade for more, and still more, and yet more, business; and often his only way of controlling his men or of developing profitable situations is by letter or wire or cable.

Of course, he has organized a wonderful selling system. His men are trained to the last degree of efficiency and they are given large liberty and freedom in closing sales, but often he is called upon to solve, by a letter or a wire, important problems which involve many thousands of dollars, and he has developed a genius

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for letter writing. Sometimes I think this is his great gift, except his uncanny skill in doing the unexpected thing, as you shall see before this story is finished.

I could tell you tales of business he has opened up and of great transactions closed, and of the one letter which made more than three hundred thousand dollars for his firm, and of other miracles which his letters have seemed to perform, and maybe I will some day, but the letter I want to tell you about now is the letter he was ashamed of.

He had persuaded our firm to call all of the salesmen to the home office for a convention. They came, nearly a thousand of them, and filled the hotels of the town to overflowing. They were dined and entertained. They were not wined, because Mr. King is a Christian. They were shown through the great plant. They met the managers, and then they all gathered in the Assembly Hall and discussed the goods and the business and the system and the field. The great men told stories of wonderful deeds in salesmanship, as interesting as the stories of the buccaneers of old—stories of sales running into the thousands and hundreds of thousands of dollars, and in the midst of competition from other firms as strong as ours and with their master salesmen on hand to win the

same prize. And then, here and there, some man was called upon to tell how he had lost some rich order to a competitor more resourceful than himself.

For four days the convention continued and those of us at home were filled with the spirit of the field and the field-men were filled with enthusiasm for the manager and the great industry at home. On the last night we had an open congress. The men from the shops and the offices were present, too, and the mammoth hall was packed to its capacity. Many addresses were made. The last one was a toast to: "Our Sales Manager, Mr. King—the King of his Craft."

Among other things, the speaker said, "When the days go wrong with me, all I need is a letter from the King. I think he is the greatest letter writer in the world. There are no two letters alike and every one meets the situation."

And then he told how the manager had helped him by letters or wires with important sales.

"A few months ago," he said, "I had a 'prospect' for an immense order, but I couldn't close him. The man I was negotiating with liked our goods. Apparently he wanted to handle them. He had listed all the articles his trade would need. I had the contract filled in, but I could not get his signature. Our competitors were on

the ground, as thick as mosquitoes in a swamp. I had written to the office here concerning this 'prospect,' and had intimated that I ought to get the order. But one night, after a day of the strongest pressure I could use, I was convinced that I had lost the largest sale that had ever come my way. I wired Mr. King, just as I was going into the dining room for supper. Two hours later I received a reply in five sentences. Every sentence was like a search light. I saw at once what to do. That telegram did the business. I went out the next morning and got my contract signed."

The crowd cheered as if they understood the taste of the sweet morsel he was rolling over his tongue.

The speaker continued: "There is one thing I have always wanted to ask of our Sales Manager, and I am going to ask him now, because nothing could be a greater inspiration or be of more value to those of us who represent this great company in the field than his answer if he will give it. I am going to ask him to tell us tonight before we disperse for another campaign, what he regards as the most important and fruitful letter he ever wrote."

The crowd didn't wait for him to finish. They called for a speech. They were just a mob of boys after all.

"Speech, speech by the King!"

"Silence! Silence! The King will speak."

"All hail the King!"

"Speech! Speech! Speech!" they cried and clamored, until Mr. King arose and began to talk.

He thanked them for their kind words and then opened up the subject of salesmanship.

"Gentlemen," he said, "your gracious words have warmed my heart tonight. It is a real triumph to have won the enthusiasm and approval of such a company of men.

"It isn't strange," he said, "that I am able sometimes to write a letter which meets your needs. I have worked in the factory in every capacity from the engine room to the shipping room. I can make almost every piece which we sell. I was collector. I worked in the credit department and then went on the road as salesman. I have seen this company grow from a small shop to the great factory it is today. I was with it in its days of poverty and I am with it in its day of power. I know its growth and development almost as accurately as the owners do. I know all the great sales which have been made, and the great sales which have been lost. We have the histories of them in our files, and almost every puzzle or problem which arises for you today has arisen some time before in some

phase or form. And then I am here where I can see the whole field and you are so close to your 'prospect' that you have a small perspective. I am like a man on a mountain top looking at you in the valley. With this view and knowledge, I sometimes am able to write letters which meet the situation. But, gentlemen, listen to me! My letters would not get the business if I did not have the best bunch of salesmen in our line to make them good. It is personality which closes sales and brings success.

"There are some fundamental elements necessary in every successful salesman. You must have a specific and comprehensive knowledge of the goods you sell. You must have an honest belief that you are selling the best article of its kind on the market. You must have intuition, originality, and resourcefulness, and, above all, personal charm. You must be full of surprises and yet have a quality of honor above all suspicion.

"I think we have the finest selling organization in the world. We have combed the earth to get the men we have. There are more than a thousand of you. We have sifted out more than twenty thousand men in making the selection we have today. I am working with you. You are working with me, and at any time,

when I can serve you by letter, by wire, by cable, or by personal service, call upon me and we will put up such a fight for business, that when we do not get it, we shall know that the 'prospect' cannot be sold at that time.

"You have asked me to tell you of the greatest letter I ever wrote. I have never told any one but my wife and didn't think that I ever would tell. The members of this firm do not know of it. My closest friends have never heard of it, and when I wrote it and had posted it, I was ashamed of it and would have recalled it if I could, but Uncle Sam never returns anything he gets his hands on."

Right there, he stopped, stepped over to me, and gave me a key to his private box in the vault. When I came back, I handed to him an old worn envelope, with the address in his handwriting. He took it from me with a strange wistful expression in his eyes. He held it up before us as if it were a sacred thing, and said:

"Gentlemen, here is the most important letter I ever wrote. Here is the letter I was ashamed of. I got it back after a number of years. The profits from this letter have been greater to the sender and receiver than the profits from any other letter I ever sent through the mails."

He was still looking at us.

He took the letter from its envelope almost tenderly. Somehow the whole scene had changed.

The house had become very still. We watched him in awe.

He smoothed the sheet out and we could see that it was worn through in creases where it had been folded.

The paper appeared yellow with age, and soiled.

He seemed to have forgotten us. He stood looking at the letter before him for several minutes; then he continued:

"I wrote this letter a good many years ago," he said. "I had been in this shop until I felt that I must have more education to succeed. Then I had gone to college for four years. It had been a struggle. I had worked my way through and we came up to the days of graduation and parting. The day after the exercises were closed, I went to every train to see my old classmates and friends off. I had some loose ends of work to clean up which took me a few days, so that I was the last to leave. When the late train had gone, I walked back through the deserted streets, which had been so full of life with the departed students. I started across the campus. The stars were very bright and the moon swung low on the horizon. The

building stood stark and still among the great trees. There were no lights from the windows. No music floated from the conservatory. No step echoed along the walks. There were no voices of laughter and song, and no slowly moving shadows of lovers in the distance. I made my way to the seat between the two great maples and sat there alone thinking.

"This had been my home for four years, and now the family was broken up. The members had scattered, and I alone was left, and my college days were over. I was as lonely as a boy could be, and homesick, and I thought of my mother and how she must have felt when the last of her family had gone and she was alone. The tears came to my eyes and I went to my room and poured out my heart to her in this letter which I am going to read to you tonight."

The great room was as silent as if it were empty.

He stood still for a minute and then he began to read:

" 'My Dear Mother:

" 'My college days are over. The other students have gone. The future is uncertain. The campus is still and I have been thinking of you, with a heart too full to talk much, if I should

see you, but I do want to write. I have been thinking how you must have felt when the last of us had gone and you were alone after the years of patience and anxiety in raising a large family. What a life you have lived, so full of sorrow and sacrifice and suffering. You have given so much and have received so little.

" 'Is this the life of all mothers? Is this the reward every girl is promised when she gives her heart to a man? I can see it all, even back to the days of my childhood. It has been one long term of service, and we never knew, and often we were not even grateful for this gift of life which you have bestowed.

" 'But tonight, with the college days and college friends gone, I can see how you have hovered over me along the years. I remember when I was so small that I wore the little red-and-white dress, and one day playing barefooted I stepped on a piece of glass, and when the blood gushed I screamed. You had me in your arms in a minute, the blood from my foot running down the front of your apron. You soon had the gash cleaned and bound, and then you took me in your arms and pillowed my head on your breast and rocked me to sleep and contentment.

" 'There is no place so restful as a mother's breast, and tonight I wish that I were a child

again, pillowed in the same warm nest with your arms around me and could hear the soft tones of the old familiar hymn, "There's a Land that is Fairer than Day," which you used to hum to us.

" 'And do you remember when I was a few years older, how I stepped on a garden rake and ran one tooth through my foot and when you reached me we tried and tried many times to pull it out before we succeeded. You were frightened that time, and sent for the doctor, but before he came you poured something into the wound which boiled and foamed and smarted. (They call it "Peroxide" now.) You followed that with turpentine, and when the old doctor came, he said: "That was just the right thing to do, Mrs. King."

" 'Mothers always know just the right thing to do; don't they, Mother?

" 'Then there was the accident when we boys were climbing the willow trees down by the brook, and we "dared" each other to climb the highest, and went higher and higher, with each step the branches becoming a little weaker and the wind swaying us like birds on a bough; and then suddenly and without warning, the limb under me broke and I started for the earth about forty feet below, and the brittle branches snapped as I struck them, and I landed in the

soft mud in the bed of the ravine, which probably saved my life. The other boys gathered me up, thinking that all of my bones were broken. They were not, but I was scratched and cut and bruised, world without end.

" 'Then there was the diphtheria. There was not much anti-toxin in those days, except the anti-toxin of love, which was effective, too; because when the doctor thought I was choking, the things I knew were your voice and touch, and they seemed in some way to open the passage for enough air to live upon.

" 'You must have had a hospital most of the time, for I had no more accidents or diseases than the other boys.

" 'And then the typhoid came and we were all sick but you. The fever ran its course with each of us, and you, Mother mine, did all the nursing for many months except what the kind neighbors did to help, and when there were no more of us to feed upon, the fever left. But some of us had gone, never to return, and the rest were poor and young. I would have thought that would have broken your spirit, if not your heart. But I can see now that sickness and death are not the worst things that can happen, and that the worst was yet to come.

" 'The days which tried your courage and

your faith were the days when we came into our teens and fell into temptation.

" 'It is a triumph to raise a boy to manhood with a healthy body.

" 'It is a greater triumph to raise one to manhood with a healthy soul. And when I look back over my life, I wonder how a boy without a mother to love him ever comes through to a manhood of honor. It seems to me that you have saved me a hundred times, and since I have been away from home, your faith and confidence in me and your love for me have gone with me all the way.

" 'Do you remember when I found the purse with six dollars in it, and how I wanted to keep it because we needed the money so badly?

" 'But you said: "No, my son, we must find the owner. It does not belong to us."

" 'For several weeks we failed to learn whose purse it was, and every day I became more hopeful that we would never learn, but you would not let me spend the money. And the day we did find the owner was about the bitterest day of my youth, until I went with you to deliver it to the gentleman who had lost it, and then somehow my grief turned to joy.

" 'How wise you were to take me with you. In that hour you taught me not to covet what might come into my possession by accident,

and not to conceal and hold anything for myself which was not mine.

" 'Do you remember when Henry took me into his father's cellar and gave me some wine? I was worried because you had talked to us a great deal about the evil which liquor does in the world. I think you knew there was something on my mind. I tried to tell you that night before I went to bed, but couldn't. I was afraid it would break your heart. I lay awake nearly all night, thinking, and the next morning, after prayers, when you had prayed in your simple way that God would go that day with your boys and hold their hands and keep them from evil, I couldn't stand it, and when we had started to school, I ran back and threw my arms around you and told you about the wine.

" 'Oh, Mother of mine! It must have been almost a death stroke. I could feel your body grow rigid, and then your arms closed about me, and held me frantically, as if you feared I would be snatched away. For a long while, you said never a word, and we did not hear the "last bell," but when I could look into your face, it was white and drawn and old and all the soft lines were gone out of it, while your eyes were brimming with tears that dripped over the lashes and ran down your cheeks and fell upon your breast.

" 'Well, there was no school for me that day. Do you remember how we talked about life and what it means, and how necessary it is that a boy should be strong enough to withstand temptation, and before the others came home, you took me to the bedroom and we both prayed about it until we found peace? When we came out of the room with your arm around me, I knew then that nothing could ever tempt me to touch liquor of any kind again. And, Mother, the whiskey business is doomed. Its moorings are breaking away, and it won't be long now until communities will feel the same shame at having a saloon in their streets they would feel at having a house of leprosy there; and yet how short a time it is since no one dared to fight the monster except a few praying mothers like yourself, who never would give up because it was the most vicious enemy of their sons and daughters.

" 'And, Mother (are all mothers as wise as you have been?) you remember my first party when I was to take my "first girl"? I remember it in every detail. It was an epoch in my life, as it is in every boy's. I was very nervous and very anxious and a little bit ashamed and very, very proud, and pretty badly frightened, with all of it hidden, as I thought, beneath a demeanor of indifference and scorn. But you

understood me and many other things as well, and the evening before the party you had me go with you to Mrs. Homer's house, nearly a mile away, and when we were returning the stars were coming out and a soft wind was blowing, and we sauntered slowly, chatting in a familiar way. You led the conversation around to the subject of the party. You told me how glad you were that I had my new suit and hat and tie, and how pleased you were that my "first girl" was Margaret, who was a very charming girl and one that any boy in town would be glad to go with, and then you talked to me about girls. You showed how they were more delicate than boys, and didn't have the rugged strength of their brothers, and how they had to depend upon boys and men for protection all through life; and that, as I should grow older, I would know them better, and that maybe some time, when I became a young man, I would find one whom I would love very, very much, and who would love me, but before that time, I would know a great many, and that I would hear boys and young men talk about them; but to remember this, that any man or boy who would make a remark about any woman, which he would not make if her brother were present, is evil of mind and a coward at heart. And then you told me that

I would find that girl's love is different from man's love; that even when girls are just in their teens, they are like little mothers, and when they love a man, they feel about him almost as a mother feels about her baby; that they gladly give to him all they have in the world and that they would lay down their lives and think it the highest joy if by it they could serve the man they love; and that a girl risks every joy in life on love. If she loves a good man who loves her, she is the happiest being in the world, and would not exchange her happiness with the angels of Heaven; but if she gives her love to a coarse, or vulgar, or unclean man, her love turns to poison which pollutes her body and stains her soul.

" 'Mother, I remember how I held my breath while you talked, and I did not understand all of it then, but I have understood since, and when we approached our gate you stopped under the big maple tree at the corner of our yard and laid your hand on my head and said, "Carter, my boy, you don't know yet anything about this thing called love, but I want you to keep your mind so pure and your body so clean that when you do find the young woman who can love you, you will have no hidden sins to conceal and no remorse for your associations with other women.

" ' "This love, son, which I am telling you about, this great, clean, holy love, is the most wonderful gift of life. God has never given us anything else like it. A man may win every other thing he wants, great fame, fabulous wealth, and honor among the nations, but if he has not found love in its purity, his life is a failure. And the woman who has not found love has lived in a dungeon on bread and water, where there was neither sun to light her world by day, nor moon nor stars by night. If she has not found this luminous love which fills all of her world with its glory, she has found nothing. Motor cars, and yachts, and mansions, and costly gems, and richest raiment, and even her children, cannot compensate her for this thing she has lost."

" 'Mother of mine, at home in your old rocker, these and a thousand other things I have been thinking about. And tonight, with college days behind and life before, I want to tell you that now I can see what your life has been through the years of suffering and service and sacrifice.

" 'I want you to know that I know what a wonderful mother you are.

" 'And, Mother, I love you. I love you, and shall love you always.' "

He stood still a moment and then he continued:

" Mother of mine, at home
in your old rocker "

"When I had finished this letter, I took it to the office. On my way back, I stopped on the campus and began to think, and a feeling of regret came over me. I was ashamed of this love letter which I had sent to my mother. I thought she would think it just the gushing sentiment of a boy.

"A few days later I received her reply. I have it pinned to my own. It is very short. It reads:

" 'My dear boy: I have your beautiful letter. I can't write very much just now. I am too happy, but I want you to know how my heart trembled as I read, and when I had finished, my eyes were full of the tears of a great joy. A letter like that is all the reward I shall ever need for what I have tried to do for you.' "

He stopped again and looked at us—not a man moved. Then he held up the letter and said:

"Gentlemen, there is the most fruitful letter I ever wrote—this love letter to my mother."

He paused. We seemed to be holding our breath. Then there came a sob from the packed house, and then—and then—they cheered and cried openly and were not ashamed. They rose and cheered and cheered again.

After a while he raised his hand, and when they were seated, he said:

"There is a sequel. Eighteen years later my

mother died, and when we opened the little box where she kept her treasures, on the top of the package of certificates of marriage and birth and death and many other sacred papers, collected through a long life, we found this letter with the creases worn into holes from much handling and the pages covered with the stains of her precious tears.

"My friends, in this audience tonight we have many boys in their teens from the shops and offices; young men who are not married, but hope to be; men with young families and men in middle life and some approaching old age. We are about to depart from this inspiring convention, where we have inaugurated the greatest campaign we have ever attempted, and as you go I want you to take with you this sentiment as my last message:

"When you are away from home, make it a habit to steal off alone and think of the house where your mother lives. Let the picture fill your mind.

"You will see the street where the old home stands.

"You will see every tree and shrub.

"You will follow the winding paths through the tangled grass.

"You will see the nests of the robins and the wrens.

"The incense of the flowers will come to you across the miles and the years.

"You will walk upon the porch and open the heavy door.

"You will see the old familiar family furniture within.

"The pictures from the walls will nod and smile their welcome and you will know them all.

"Then listen and you will hear the creak of your mother's chair and the hum of old home songs.

"You will see her sitting alone thinking.

"She is thinking of her children.

"She is thinking of you.

"The songs will cease and you will see the tears drop upon her breast where she has pillowed your head a thousand times and rocked you away into the children's Palace of Dreams.

"And while you watch, she will lift her swimming eyes toward heaven and pray to the Good God in whom she puts her trust, to walk with her boy along the Highway of Life unto the very end.

"She is your mother. She has loved you from the beginning. She loves you now. She will love you forever.

"My friends, think of your mother every day. Write to her often and tell her how much you love her.

"Her step may be feeble from the long journey she has taken for you.

"Her hands may tremble from the weight of years.

"Her eyes may be dim for other sights.

"Her ears may be impaired for other sounds.

"Her pulse may beat slowly to other calls, but no woman's heart ever grows old to love. It rejoices in the old, old story in the soft and tender tones, and it will flutter like the heart of a girl when you tell her that you love her.

"Next to faith in God, this is the loftiest sentiment of life. And we know that the business of our great house will be safe in the hands of men who think of their mother every day and are trying to make her dreams for them come true.

"You will be better workmen in the shop and produce a better article.

"You will be more loyal in the office and develop a better system.

"You will sell more goods in the field, and you will make our House known for its lofty character wherever men travel by land or sea.

"And, finally, you will come into the years of maturity or middle life or old age with such tender memories as will fill your days with peace and crown your life with glory.

"And now, my friends, good night! I have

talked to you in this hour in a way that leaves me open to criticism. I have let you look into my private life, at personal and intimate things, but I am not ashamed. I have given you the most important message I shall ever give, both for yourselves and for the house you serve, because:

"The man who is true to the love of his mother will never be false to the trust of his firm.

"Gentlemen, think of your mother every day.

"Write to her often, and

"Tell her that you love her."

THE SON THOU GAVEST ME

THE SON THOU GAVEST ME

"Where a Man's Treasure Is"—

I AM sitting in an easy chair in our handsome country home tonight, with my wife on the opposite side of the grate. I have been thinking of the life behind us. We are not old; we are not young; but we are alone. Men call me successful, but my life has been a failure; and I shall tell you why.

As I sit in my easy chair and write these lines, I look down the avenue of time over all the life I have traveled. I see myself as a poor boy. I looked upon the leaders of men, and meant to become one of them. I watched the owners of great fortunes, and determined to make a fortune for myself. I heard of men who had become famous, and I hungered for fame. I dedicated my life to success—success as I knew it.

I went into business as a clerk. I became a bookkeeper, department manager, then superintendent; and at twenty-five I was receiving three thousand dollars per year. I had not

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spent much time with women until I met Mary. I lost my head and heart the first time I saw her. I was infatuated by her beauty and charm. Oh! she was sweet and gracious and winsome. And while I look back upon the wreck and failure of my life I know that my one success was when I won her; and my heart melts with pity and love as I look at her gazing into the fire, thinking. She is always thinking, and I know what she is thinking about.

Well, we were married, and Mary helped and encouraged. We prospered, and after a while we had a boy, and Mary blossomed. Something came into her life with the boy which made all the girlish blossoms open. It was as if God had come to her and had blessed her and had laid a new glory upon her.

The boy grew, and our fortune grew. I had many interests, and was away from home much of the time. I was too busy to father the boy. He went to school; at first he did well, but he got into bad company, and in his teens he became wild and wilder. At first he humiliated us, and then disgraced us, and Mary began to fade.

I had always had some religion about me. It had never been used very much, but when our boy got beyond advice and persuasion and

punishment I began to look to God to save him, but I meant to help.

I planned to go out with our boy and be his companion—

When I had time.

I resolved to attend church services regularly and take him with me—

When I had time.

I hoped to interest him in young people's societies—

When I had time.

I determined to secure membership in the Young Men's Christian Association for him and for myself—

When I had time.

I promised myself that I would take him into my confidence and talk to him as every father should talk to his own son—

When I had time.

But I was immersed in business.

Mary, though, found the time. She clung to God and refused to believe that He would abandon her boy. At first she prayed with an aching, breaking heart. She would not leave home. She was always there when the boy needed her, and when I came in at night her face showed the struggle. She would smile at me and try to hide her grief, but it was there. Then, after a while, her faith settled into a

calm belief that God would be her friend, and then—well, I don't know how it happened, but one day our boy seemed to see that he was breaking his mother's heart. For a few days he was restless and anxious; then one night at three o'clock he came to his mother and awakened her and led her to his own room and said:

"Mother, I have been all wrong; I want to get right. I have been wicked; I want to be good. I have broken your heart with grief; I want to make you happy forever. I have made you ashamed of me; I want to make you proud of me. Won't you show me how?"

He threw his arms around her neck as he had done when a child, and cried as if his heart would break, while his mother cried from pure joy. It was the happiest day of her life, and her heart praised God for His goodness. When his grief had passed she talked to him of life and love and manhood and God. She told him how she had prayed and how God had promised to save her boy, and when she was through they knelt by his bed and prayed together.

What a wonderful thing is the heart of a mother! What hath God wrought in the mother who mothers!

After that the boy was the joy of our lives and gave promise of achieving great things.

While Mary had saved our boy, I had saved a fortune and had become a banker. My business grew and grew. My name was often in the papers, and I dealt with the kings of trade. My hours at home were rare. Money was my Master, and gold was my God, but I loved Mary—

When I had time.

The boy grew and went to college, and came to have an idolatrous love for me. He thought his father the greatest man in the world. When at home for vacation he haunted the office. He wanted to be with me always, and I loved him, too—

When I had time.

As I had grown older and affairs multiplied and grave responsibilities came I began to think more of religion. I prayed oftener and saw the great need of God in business, and many times I called to Him and He answered me. He gave me commercial wisdom, and I prayed to Him daily about my business affairs, and in a way I came to love Him, too—

When I had time.

Well, the panic came which shook business and banks to their foundations. Many old houses went down and dragged famous names with them, and then I went to God as I had never gone to Him before.

When the panic was at its worst we received

a wire that our boy was sick and was being sent home. He developed a strange mania for me in his sickness. He wanted his mother by him every minute, but he wanted me to hold his hand. When he was restless it soothed him, and he would sink from the wildest delirium to the most peaceful slumber while I held his hand.

The doctor said he was in a serious condition, but that he hoped to save him if we could calm him and make him sleep without opiates. My days and nights were full, for I stayed at the bank by day and by the bed by night. I prayed often; I prayed for the boy; I prayed for the business, but I found that my mind in prayer would wander from the bed to the bank. It was natural, was it not, since for twenty years I had thought one hundred times of business where I had thought once of the boy?

The critical period in the boy's illness came the very day of the most critical condition at the bank. All night I had kept him calm by sitting in a chair beside the bed, holding the slender hand in mine. The doctor came early. He said the boy was about holding his own, but must be kept as quiet as possible at any cost. Mary brought my breakfast and I still sat by the bed. She often went into her own room, and I knew she was talking with God. Until ten o'clock I kept our boy asleep. Then

"Her eyes looked up into mine and implored me not to go"

a servant came in and said the bank wanted me. A feeling of fear swept over me as I went to the 'phone. They were helpless and begged me to come at once.

I felt Mary's hand on my sleeve, and her eyes looked up into mine and implored me not to go. Our boy had become restless at my absence. I put my arm around her and we went into her room, and I told her the bank might fail if I did not go; that I would come back as soon as possible.

I was about to go out when she caught my hand and said: "Oh, David, let us pray for our boy before you go." So we knelt right there with my arm around her and prayed to the Good Lord to save our boy. When we arose her eyes were filled with tears, and she hid her face on my breast and wept great sobs. I comforted her after a while and started out. She caught my hand and led me through the sick-room, and we looked down at our only child. His delirium was rising again. I picked up his hand and held it until he fell asleep, then I went out. At the steps I kissed Mary good-by, telling her I would come home as soon as I could get away.

When I arrived at the bank the officers were in secret session. I went in and listened to the reports. We needed nearly one-half million dol-

lars to steady the bank and restore confidence. It was not in sight when we adjourned. I went to my office and locked the door. I stood by my chair for a few minutes. The picture of my life passed before me, and I saw this monument which I had built about to be destroyed. I fell on my knees and prayed as I had never prayed, and not once in my prayer did I think of the boy at home. I asked God to save this palace of commerce. "Oh, God," I cried, "save the bank at any cost, and I swear to you that I will follow you all the days of my life."

My secretary knocked at the door. I arose and opened it, and the fight for the bank began. The things we did that day are still talked of among bankers. My mind had never been so clear, nor my judgment so sane.

Every hour Mary sent a message from the sick-room: "About the same, but restless." "Restless, come home when you can." "Restless, he calls for you."

And so the day wore on. At two-thirty I got hold of a client who could furnish the money. Five hundred thousand he brought me, and the bank was saved. I called the officers into the directors' room. They forgot the terrors of the day and almost smothered me with congratulations.

In the midst of this jubilee my secretary

brought me Mary's 'phone message: "Much weaker. Come as soon as you can."

I got into my coat and had reached the door when a boy called me to the 'phone. It was the doctor. He said in a grave voice: "I am sorry to give you this message, but your son is dead."

They took me home after a while. On the way I remembered the two prayers. In one I had prayed God to help my son, then had risen and left my own boy sick unto death to make the fight alone; and I knew in my heart that if I had stayed with him he would have lived. In the other I had called on God, then had risen and marshalled all the resources of the great city to help me. God answered the prayer for which I worked.

And so Mary and I sit tonight in our country home. The fire glows in the grate. She is thinking—always thinking—and I know the pictures which flit through her mind.

And I, I look back to the day of doom, and I think of the two prayers. My heart bleeds when I remember that God answered my soul-cry that day.

The snow is falling without. It lies like a blanket covering hill and vale. It hangs from the trees like cotton from the open boll. I can see it banking against the shrubs and the fence.

The wind sighs softly, but the house is very still. There is no voice of children; there will be none of grandchildren. The past is past; there will be no future here.

The bank is solid as the mountain.

The grave holds its own.

Why should I complain? Have I not received that for which I prayed? Do I not have that for which I labored?

But the house is still—very still. I seem to be bleeding somewhere within.

And now I could love my boy if I had him. I'd find the time. I'd take the time.

For what doth it profit a man if he owns the whole world and loses his own son? Or what will a man give in exchange for his son?

THE HAPPIEST WOMAN IN THE WORLD

THE HAPPIEST WOMAN IN THE WORLD

OUR old doctor had told me stories from the days of my childhood, but not one which would reveal the secrets of his patients, until he told this one I am telling you now. I was sitting with him on his wide veranda after the Sunday evening service. Our hearts were full to overflowing. The church had been packed with a great multitude and many listened from without. The sermon had been upon the Resurrection of Jesus. The white-haired minister who had preached to our people for more than thirty years seemed inspired as he traced the life of his Master through its joys and sorrows, its struggles and tragedies and consuming love, and when he came to the Resurrection he turned his fine old face toward Heaven and with the tears streaming down his cheeks and his arms uplifted he cried: "Oh our Father in heaven, we thank Thee for this Light of the World which burst from the Tomb of Joseph to light us more and more unto the Perfect Day. Oh we thank Thee! We thank Thee! We thank Thee for the Resurrection

and the Life which fill all the world with Thy Glory."

Our old minister was not only a remarkable man, but a man of God, and when he told the story of the Love-Triumphs of his Master his face shone with a wonderful light, his voice rang with a strange authority and he could have led us, like some ancient crusader, back to the Holy Land to take it and possess it in the name of his Lord. When he had finished we sat in a trance, but the service was not closed. Without an introduction a lady arose in the choir and sang, "The Holy City." There was a quality in her voice which I had never heard in any human voice before. Our hearts trembled in response and we forgot the old church and the town in which we lived while she led us into strange lands among strange scenes, and when she came to the climax: "Jerusalem, Jerusalem, sing for the night is o'er," it seemed as if the broken hearts of the world had been healed and were joining in this song of triumph and of praise. When she had closed, the multitude was suffused in tears or convulsed with sobs. She had broken our hearts with tenderness.

The minister lifted his hand and dismissed us: "And now may the Lord bless thee, and keep thee, and make His face to shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee, and give thee peace."

Mrs. Browning, the singer, had been brought up among us, but had gone to college, and had married, and no one knew much of her, except that she had had great sorrow. Only the doctor knew the story of her life and he had never told.

On this night we sat on his porch, our hearts still tender from the evening service. For a long while we were silent and then the doctor turned to me and said: "I am going to break the rule of my life and tell you a story about one of my patients. I am going to tell you about 'the happiest woman in the world.'"

But still he sat for a long while saying nothing, his eyes far away as if he were following strange scenes, and then he came back and began his story:

"The lady who sang tonight is an old friend of mine," he said. "I have known her always. I was with her mother when the child was born. She had a crown of yellow hair and the nurse called her the 'Golden Treasure,' and from this the family named her Golden though her hair changed to brown.

"She was a happy baby and a happy child and made every one around her happy, as some children do. She had a passion for loving old ladies. If she found a stray curl blowing loose on some old lady's head, she would slip up and

lift the curl and plant a kiss on the neck beneath it. She had the sweetest way of talking to them and of coddling and petting them, and as she grew older she grew happier, and developed a loveliness I have never seen in any other girl of her age. Her mother was wise with her and taught her all the practical duties of keeping a house and making a home.

"When she was eighteen she was the pride of the women and the rage of the men. We feared that so much adulation might spoil her, but she was not spoilable. She seemed to bless every one she touched with sweetness and joy, and she developed a positive genius for happiness.

"I had watched her grow, but had never discovered this hunger in her until she was almost a young lady. She was standing at her gate one evening as I approached her on my way home. I stopped and laid my hand upon her brown curls and said: 'Well, Golden, what has happened? You look as cross as a crow.'

" 'Why doctor,' she replied, 'you are teasing me. I am sure that I don't look cross. I am the happiest girl in town. I am too happy. It can't last. I have never had a sorrow and everybody blesses me with kindness. There never was a girl who had so much to thank God for. Look at my pretty home. My mother is

a darling. My father is a dear and we are all happy together. I ought to sing hallelujahs the whole day through. It can't last, can it, doctor? You are an old man and you have known so many people; did you ever know anyone who was always happy?'

" 'No, Golden,' I said, 'I have never seen anyone live a life without sorrow, and you will have yours, but sometimes sorrow glorifies happiness and I hope when yours comes that you may find the Glory of God at the heart of it.'

"Well, her sorrow came only too soon. Her mother passed away within the year. I thought the child would die of grief, but she held to her God and when she came out of it she had a happiness which was as unselfish as the smile of a child, and it crowned her beauty with a strange glory.

"There was not a young man who knew her who would not have laid down his life for her, but she had never loved and her heart was still free when she went to college, but there she met him. I had always been afraid of her love affairs, because I knew that when she did love, she would love some man to madness, and so when I learned that she was keeping company with a young fellow, I went out to the college to look him over.

"There was nothing very remarkable about

him. He had the reputation of being a fine, clean chap, rather impractical, a good deal of a dreamer, with no conspicuous ability. I didn't think he was worthy of her, but she was as proud of him as a young mother of her first baby, and no doubt I was a prejudiced judge. Meanwhile Golden had blossomed into a woman, and had found a teacher in the conservatory who understood and developed her voice until she became a very fine singer. She was not a genius perhaps, but she was very nearly one. In singing popular songs the charm of her voice did not appear, but in anthems and hymns and songs of prayer and praise there was some quality in her voice which melted the human heart to tears.

"Well, they graduated and a year or two later they were married. No doubt I had been mistaken in my estimate of young Browning, because he began at once to develop. Whatever weakness he had had for epigrams and poetry he forgot. He studied architecture and building and was so successful that within a few years he was worth a comfortable fortune and their infatuation still held. They were not spoiled and were always together, and they held a simple sane religion which pervaded all of their lives, and they had two children to bless their home.

"Golden's voice improved as she grew older. She received many flattering offers to sing, but always she just cuddled up close to her husband and said, 'I am glad God has put a bird in my throat, Gordon, but it is just for you and for the children and for our friends, and the sick. Nothing could induce me to leave our happy home.'

"She did make two exceptions. She would sing in the church sometimes and always to the sick when they wanted her, and many men and women and children have gone to their last sleep believing they heard the angels from the other shore.

"It happened that I was in their city when they had been married six or seven years. I had been out to dinner and then we heard Melba and after the concert we went to a café for refreshments. We were about to leave when Gordon met some friends and Golden and I were alone and I said to her: 'Golden, you do seem happy and you grow more beautiful every day. Are you as happy as you look?'

" 'Oh doctor,' she exclaimed, 'I am the happiest woman in the world. I have my babies and Gordon and health for all of us. But, doctor, I am terrified sometimes, when I think of the things which might happen. Such happiness can't last, can it, doctor?'

" 'I hope yours may hold for many years, Golden,' I replied as her husband came back to us.

"We separated for the night. I went to the hotel expecting to leave early the next morning. But about two o'clock I was called to the phone where I recognized Gordon's voice.

" 'Hello, doctor,' he called; 'there is something wrong with Golden. Could you come out?'

"I didn't ask any questions, but went as fast as a car could carry me. Gordon met me at the door. He was white and frightened.

" 'What is the matter?' I asked.

" 'I don't know; Golden can't talk.'

"I went into the living room where she was sitting in a big chair. She smiled and arose as I went to her. She pointed to her throat and tried to speak, but could not utter a sound.

"I examined her closely. She seemed perfectly well in every other way, but she had lost her voice. In my practice I had never had a case like it. I called the best specialist in the city to come out at once. He looked her over carefully, then told them to go to bed, that he would see them early in the morning.

"When we had climbed into his car the specialist said: 'She will never speak again; her vocal cords are paralyzed.'

"I made no reply. He let me out at my hotel and I lay on my bed without sleeping, looking into the future, at the desolation before her. She was as dear to me as my own child. I looked through the eyes of the physician and the eyes of love and as I saw the horror of it all, it seemed to me that I had received a fatal wound and that my life was slowly ebbing away.

"I saw it all:

"She would be a ghost in her own house.

"Her voice would never be heard in her home.

"She would never call to her husband.

"She would never coo to her babies.

"She would never hum the sweet home songs.

"She would never sing those rare melodies for her family and friends.

"She would never move the multitude and flood them with tenderness.

"There would be no more quiet talks at twilight, and under the stars.

"There would be no more love in the old, old tones.

"She would never laugh.

"She would never cry.

"She loved with the passion of an angel, but love's voice was dead.

"She was a mother, but she would never prattle to her children.

"She was a lute without a voice.

"She was a harp without a sound.

"She was a song bird without a song.

"No more repartee.

"No flashes of wit.

"No word of kindness or of courage.

"The Golden I had known was dead and I prayed to the Good Lord to take her body since she had lost her joy.

"We waited until the specialist was certain there could be no hope of recovery. When we had to tell Golden we feared that it would break her spirit, but she only smiled and wrote on a piece of paper: 'There is a God of Love who will guard His children.'

"But there were days which followed when we feared for her sanity. Gordon sold out his business and invested his money in what were deemed gilt edge securities and stayed at home with his family. It was then that the great soul of him proved his worth. He was as gentle as a woman, and cared for her as he would have cared for a child. He read everything to be found upon the malady which had overwhelmed them; and wherever he could learn of a specialist in such diseases, he took her to see him. They went to London and Berlin and Leipsic and then they returned home without help and without hope. Her health began to

fail and a black gloom settled over them. Her piano was her only consolation. Gordon took her to hear every singer who came within reasonable distance and when we had all lost hope of any happiness for her she turned to Christian songs and hymns of praise. Then she began to pray much of the time and she said to Gordon: 'All things are possible to our Heavenly Father.'

"That was the turning point and while it did not affect her speech, it affected her mental condition and she came into a strange happiness. She spent many hours each day at the piano, often improvising as she played. They were always hymns and songs of praise and glory to God for His goodness. All the music of the voice which had been stilled, the music of her great love which never found expression, with the tenderness of her mother's love for her babies, came out in this passionate music which poured from the piano in tides of enchanting beauty and enthralling charm. It would melt one to tears or give one courage to lay down one's life for his friends. It has seemed to me as I have listened that there never was such music in heaven or earth as that which flooded her home when her heart was breaking. She never wrote this music out and if there were words we did not know it.

"I asked her why she did not have the music printed and she replied by writing:

" 'Oh no, these are my prayers and only the Father could understand them.'

"In all my practice I have never seen a house of tragedy like the Browning home, but it was to be worse, and worse yet and still worse before the end came.

"Up to this time they had had every comfort, but one day without warning the securities which Gordon had bought with his fortune became valueless and he was a poor man. For one day only he was stunned. The next he went into his old office and asked his successors to let him have such work as he could do at home. When Golden heard of their loss she dismissed her servants and did all of her own work, even to the washing. Sometimes at the end of the month they met their bills and sometimes they failed. The day came when they had nothing but their little family and their great love, and the piano. They moved into a small cottage in the outskirts of the city and faced a future as black as night, but it was to be blacker yet.

"Gordon was walking out from the city one night when a driver lost control of his car and the car struck him, throwing him nearly thirty feet. They picked him up for dead and took

him home, and sent for the doctor. There was no hope of recovery. It seemed only a question of a few hours. When the doctor was gone, she went into the room where her husband lay and locked the door. She went over to the bed and took his hand and looked at the wreck of her lover and her happiness. She could not cry. She could not talk to him. Great sobs shook her, but no sound came from the voiceless throat. She kneeled by the bed and prayed to the Great God in whom she believed. Then suddenly she arose and fled to the piano and began to play those wonderful prayers which nobody knew but herself and God. They were the cry of a broken heart. But after a while she became calm, and wired to me to come to her.

"Gordon had not yet regained consciousness. The mystery was that he lived at all, but day after day the slender thread of life held, though each hour seemed weaker than before. Golden would not leave his room. He seemed quieter when she was near and so she knelt by his bed and held his hand. Sometimes he was delirious and talked about strange things which we did not understand, but one day he whispered: 'Golden, sing-sing-sing-the-H-O-L-Y C-I-T-Y.'

"She turned her face to me with such a look of terror as I hope never to see in a human face

again. He was dying and calling upon her to do the one thing which she could not do. He repeated the request. No words of mine could picture the agony of her face and eyes. Her lover was calling and she could not answer. Then she ran to the piano and played the tune —played it as I have never heard it played in this world. At first he seemed to listen and then he wandered off into that mysterious land of delirium.

"The same scene was enacted the next day and the next and when she had come back on the third day I said to her: 'Golden, I would give every possession I have in the world if you could sing that song to him today,' and she wrote, 'Oh if I could I would die so happy.' During these days I think she prayed every minute. If she slept I never knew it and why Gordon lived no one knew.

"On the fourth day about the same time, he seemed to rally a little and he said again: 'Golden, s-s-s-sing, the H-O-L-Y C-I-T-Y,' and then the miracle happened—without effort or excitement she began to sing:

'Last night I lay a sleeping. There came a dream so fair;
I stood in Old Jerusalem beside the Temple there.

"Without effort or excitement she began to sing"

I heard the children singing, and ever as they sang,
Methought the voice of Angels from Heaven in answer rang,
Jerusalem, Jerusalem, lift up your gates and sing;
Hosanna in the highest, Hosanna to your King.

'And then methought my dream was changed. The streets no longer rang.
Hushed were the glad Hosannas, the little children sang.
The Sun grew black with mystery, the morn was cold and chill,
As the shadow of a Cross arose upon a lonely hill.
Jerusalem, Jerusalem, hark how the Angels sing:
Hosanna in the highest, Hosanna to your King.

'And once again the scene was changed. New Earth there seemed to be.
I saw the Holy City beside the tideless sea.
The light of God was on its streets. The gates were opened wide,
And all who would might enter, and no one was denied.

No need of moon or stars by night, nor sun to
shine by day;
It was the New Jerusalem that would not pass
away.
Jerusalem, Jerusalem, sing, for the night is
o'er.
Hosanna in the highest, Hosanna for ever
more.
Hosanna in the highest, Hosanna for ever
more.'

—"Joy and thanksgiving, tears and sobs and the cry of a breaking heart were in her voice. Gordon opened his eyes and listened until she had finished and then he smiled and sank into a deep slumber, while Golden ran to the piano and played and sang her prayers for an hour with her pent-up love flowing in tides of thanksgiving up to the throne of God.

"Day after day she sang to him and day after day he grew stronger until she had brought him back to health once more.

"When I was about to leave, I went in and bade Gordon good-by, and when I left the house Golden came with me to the gate, where we stopped and turned to look at the little cottage where such strange things had happened.

" 'There is the house of miracles, Golden,' I said. 'Did you ever lose faith?'

"She watched the floating clouds a few moments, while a glow of tenderness spread over her face and then she said: 'Well, doctor, every day I said to my Heavenly Father—"Jesus promised us that we could ask what we would in His name, believing, and it should be granted," and so I just asked for the thing which would bring Gordon back to us, and you see, doctor, you see because I would not let Him go, He gave me more than I have asked Him for.'

"I climbed into the car and we started for the city. When we were on the top of the hill, I looked back. Golden was still standing at the gate. I waved my hand in farewell and she waved her handkerchief in reply and I said:

" 'What measure can measure the love of a woman?' "

The old doctor had stopped and we sat in silence for a long while; then we heard the latch of the gate click and a lady came up the walk among the flowers. It was the lady—the singer at the service—the Golden Browning of the story he had just told me. The doctor went down the walk to meet her and led her into his office. They talked for half an hour and when they came out she was holding his hand.

At the steps she turned to bid him good-by.

He laid his other hand upon her shoulder and said: "Golden, it was charming of you to come this long way from the main line to see your old doctor."

"I had to come," she replied. "I could not pass through the State and not come to see you."

"And are you happy, Golden?" he asked.

"Oh, doctor," she replied, "I am the happiest woman in the world. When I was only a girl, you said to me, 'When sorrow comes to you, Golden, I hope you will find God at the heart of it!' Well, I found Him, and when there seemed no hope, I got so close to Him that I found that Jesus was surely the Light of the World. And now though there is one of us in heaven and three of us here, we do not mourn. Sorrow has glorified happiness and we seem to be living in both worlds."

"Of all the tragedies I ever knew, Golden, the tragedy in your little cottage was the saddest," he said.

"Oh yes, oh yes, I know, doctor. It was the great price we paid for the joy which followed, just as Jesus paid the price for His Joy in the salvation of the world. And, doctor, Gordon and I would pay the price again for the blessings and great love it has brought us. And, doctor, we want you to be happy too. You

have blessed this town for sixty years; working with God you saved my husband and my happiness. Every day of my life I pray for you, and I know that we can never pay the great debt of love we owe to you."

"Give the glory to God, Golden; you and Gordon were beyond the aid of doctors," he said.

She threw her arms around his neck and kissed him as if he had been her own father. Then she turned and hurried down the gravel walk.

We listened until the sound of her steps had died away, and then the old doctor said in a low voice:

"Yes, she is the happiest woman in the world, I guess. She has paid the price. There is love and great joy in the heart of those who hold His hand through all the night and walk with God until the morning."

And in the long silence which followed, the refrain came back to me: "J-e-r-u-s-a-l-e-m, J-e-r-u-s-a-lem, sing for the night is o'er," as if the song and the story were one.

THE GUESTS OF THE HOUSE

THE GUESTS OF THE HOUSE

THEY used to call her Winnie when I knew her as a girl, and she was no more attractive than her name. She was a slender, long-necked, hollow-chested, freckle-faced girl who had a queer little love affair, about which I am not going to tell you, and when the young fellow just drifted away and forgot her, no one blamed him very much. But Winnie had some wild ideas about tragedy and death. Instead, though, of doing anything rash, she went to the city and got a position at six dollars per week in a department store; and now she is called Winsome by her friends and she is known from coast to coast as one of the remarkable women of the country.

When I saw her a few days ago she was dressed in a gown fit for a princess. She greeted me as cordially as if we had been on the old school grounds at home, except that she was Winsome in temperament and manner and I thought I had never known a more appropriate name. When she was about to enter her car I asked her if I could get an interview.

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"For publication?" she asked.

"Yes," I replied.

"Oh, my, no!" she said. "I never have talked for personal publicity in my life, but just come up and call on me and let us have an old home-folks visit."

So the next day I called and we roamed the delightful fields of childhood as if we had never had an ambition in the world, and then I persuaded her to tell me the story of her remarkable business and social career.

And so she began, at first slowly and reminiscently as if picking up stray threads and then with enthusiasm until she unraveled this wonderful story of business success and commercial secrets, which opens the door for us and lets us look at the maps and plans and purposes and dreams and visions in the very holy of holies of big business the world over.

"You see," she said, "when I left home I knew as little about business as any child in short dresses and I was very plain and homely and lonely, and the wonder is that any department manager would give me a position at all. Help must have been very scarce, but he took pity upon me and put me in the wrapping department, which is the most insignificant in the establishment and requires the commonest kind of help. I was in that mental state when noth-

"I just sucked in my breath . . . and stared after the retreating figure"

ing but work can give one any interest in life. But in the mammoth store there were unusual experiences happening every day and after a while I found myself becoming interested in the great commercial palace where some people had things to sell and others wanted to buy. Then I began to notice the prominent people in the many departments and heard gossip of salaries paid, which, to me, sounded like a life-time fortune for a month of labor; and as I became better acquainted I learned that the big money was paid to those people who had performed the miracles in selling goods.

"So I began to watch and listen to the sales girls working next to me and one day, in a crush of trade, I was called in to help, and because the busy season was coming on I was kept there.

"One day a fine-looking young woman came to our counter and purchased some trinket. She did not wear a hat and so I knew that she was with some department of the store. When she had gone, the girl next to me said: 'See that?'

" 'Uhuh,' I replied.

" 'Buyer and manager of the Cloak Department—$6,000.00 a year.'

"I just sucked in my breath and said nothing, but stared after the retreating figure. Six

thousand dollars a year! Twenty times as much as I was receiving.

"Well, the store was full of gossip, especially about those higher up. There were fairy tales of salaries and wonder-tales of wealth, intermingled with jealousy and prejudice and hatred. But through it all there leaked into my sad little brain this fact, that nearly every one of those in a position of importance had begun at the very bottom and I learned that the manager of the Cloak Department had once held the very position which had been given to me. It made me tremble to think that the fine, womanly, graceful woman who had been at our counter had at one time been doing just what I had to do, and that out of that position she had become the possessor of the fabulous salary which she was receiving.

"That night I went home wondering if another miracle like that could ever be wrought. I ran into my room and threw off my street clothes and turned to straighten my hair and when I saw myself in the glass I broke into tears. There stood the tiredest, thinnest, homeliest little shadow of a girl that ever looked into a mirror and I felt sure that nothing could put me into the coveted Cloak Department.

"After supper I went to my room and cried myself to sleep as I lay across the bed with my

clothes on. But I dreamed that I had learned to sell goods; that I had learned all there was to know about the stock in our department, and that my knowledge of the articles made them attractive to the customers who came to look them over. I got up the next morning full of my dream and I said to myself: 'Others have learned how and I can learn it,' and with that day I began to see that I must understand and know all there was to know about the goods we had to sell.

"I didn't have a very good day, but somehow I had caught the joy of selling and I never thought of my salary or what I would do with it. I wanted to sell, and to sell to every customer who came. While, as I say, I didn't have a very good day, yet I learned at night that my sales were the largest in my department, and I was happy.

"The next day my sales were lower than the head saleswoman's and I was as blue as a plum. Then I began to read every little circular of information that came to us with any article and I discovered that I was gaining knowledge and that day by day I crowded the highest sales and sometimes held the record, and my poor little starved heart laughed within me. And sometimes when I had made a sale to some critical customer, my joy would break into an ecstasy

which I had never known in my forlorn little life.

"It happened that a salesman from the factory stopped and told us how the goods were made and then related interesting stories about the members of his firm and why their goods were always of uniform grade and superior quality. The stories were interesting and one day when trying to sell to a customer, and feeling that I was going to fail, I told the story to her which the salesman had told to me. The sale was closed, and I said to myself: 'It is knowledge of the thing you sell, if you have a good article, which will sell it.' And so I became as greedy as a scientist for facts about our line. When I realized that we had the quality and style and that I was surely learning the secret of selling, my heart grew light, and I began to forget all about loneliness and homeliness and tears.

"So the weeks went by and my sales increased as I came to know the goods we had to sell and the people we had to sell to, and one day I discovered that there was a great deal more to learn about the people than there was about the goods, because the goods were about the same from day to day. They never changed much. But the people who drifted past our counter or came and sorted over our stock were as varied as the leaves of the forest. There

were no two alike and the same people would not be in the same mood two days in succession. Their temper changed with the weather or their digestion, and we had no way of getting a report on their disposition for the day, but had to divine it by instinct as they approached us, and I learned in many ways to read the signs of happiness and gloom, of love and hate, and of generosity and greed.

"That was a great discovery for me and I saw myself responding to it as I would receive this wireless message from my customers before I heard their voice; and my manner would change to suit their mood and the sale would be made without fuss or friction and they would go away satisfied. After learning that fundamental principle of salesmanship, I found that the customers who had traded with me once came directly to me upon their return to our counter, and my work became easier and the sales much larger, until I aroused the jealousy of the best saleswoman we had by equalling or surpassing her sales.

"Well, one day the head saleswoman said she was going to be married and that Saturday would be her last day in the store. Someone was going to get her position at twelve dollars per week. The big question popped into the head of every one of us the minute we learned

she was going. There was no chance for me, I felt sure, because I was the last one employed, and then I was green and homely, but I wondered and wondered through all of my waking hours and throughout most of my dreams.

"Saturday morning I wakened with the big question still in my mind, and suddenly I seemed to remember that my sales had been larger than those of any girl in our department excepting those of the girl who was leaving, and then I did the bravest thing I have ever done in my life. When the store closed that night I went to the office of the manager of our department and asked him if he could give me the position.

"He looked at me a long while with a puzzled expression in his eyes and then he said: 'Why, Winnie, I don't see how I can do it. You haven't been with us very long and you haven't had much experience, but I have been watching your record and you can sell goods.'

" 'Isn't that what you want?' I asked.

" 'Yes, that is what we want, but there are other things to be considered in the head of a department. There must be the quality of leadership and the ability to organize and teach and compel other clerks to sell. I haven't just the girl I want and I would be tempted to try you, but I can't. I simply can't.'

" 'And why can't you?' I asked.

" 'Because,' he said, 'you are so darned homely, and you don't know how to wear clothes.'

"The blood all left my heart and came up into my face until it turned crimson.

"He saw it and felt ashamed and said: 'There, there now, I ought not to have said it, but if you could keep that color in your cheeks instead of freckles I'd give you the job.'

" 'It's a bargain. I'll get a five-gallon can of scarlet paint and dip my face in it every morning,' I flashed back at him angrily.

" 'You shall have a trial at the position for a week for that retort,' he said. 'Now see what you can do with it.'

"I walked out of his office the happiest, broken-hearted girl that ever drowned her joy in tears. I sobbed over the insulting remarks he had made, but there was a sweet tremor which stirred deeply within me over my little triumph. I was the head saleswoman of our department, although it was regarded as the least important department in the store.

"All day Sunday I spent trying to find some way to swell my sales, for Monday is the day of all days in the city, as Saturday is in the country.

"About five days of the week we had only

three clerks in our department, but on Monday we had six and my first day's experience was to be with the larger force.

"I didn't know one thing about teaching others how to sell. I knew only how I had learned by listening. So when the girls came, I said: 'I will sell to each customer who comes until the crowd begins to gather and I want each one of you to be arranging goods busily nearby, so that you can hear all that I shall say to our customers without appearing to listen. This is a bright day and we may have great crowds. Now remember this, that we are to make this the biggest Monday this department has known. I want the new girls to see if they can sell as many goods as the older clerks.' The older girls were bitter because I had been promoted over them, but this challenge compelled them to keep up their record.

"We had a good day. We didn't break the record, but the next morning the manager came down the aisle and complimented us and gave me an approving smile. 'A good start,' he said. 'But you know the story of the new broom.'

" 'Yes,' I said, 'I know the story, but let us hope that this broom may sweep better as it grows older.'

"And that is the way I found myself among the managers of the departments and from that

time on I felt responsibility for myself and for others. As I look back now over all the improvements which have been made during the years of my experience I wonder that the old methods did not bankrupt every store in the country.

"One day we were very busy. All of my clerks had customers and I was standing at the head of the counter, watching to see that the customers were properly served and this is what I saw: One of the clerks was lounging on the counter, while she showed the goods. Another was interlarding her remarks with slang, and another gave some impudent retort to a critical customer, and her hair was frowsy. I suppose we had been guilty of those things all the time, but I had never seen them.

"I began to talk to the girls about those little objectionable personal habits. At first they resented my interference and said that all the girls in the store practiced them. 'That is true,' I said, 'but we are in the least desirable department of this store. We are the poorest paid; we have the least consideration and if hard times should come on we would be the very first clerks who would be dropped. I can't afford to lose my position, and I know that you can't, and so we shall have to make our department important by making money for the house, so

that if there is any change we shall be taken care of.'

"I began the custom of requiring the salesgirls to read thoroughly every daily advertisement and printed circular on the goods we had to sell, and would sometimes question them in a kind of examination. It was not long until they caught the joy of selling, too, and we did draw an enormous patronage for our pains.

"One day a pathetic thing happened. A little dried-up, tired, weary woman came to our counter. Her clothes were shabby and her hat was out of style. The salesgirl waiting on her showed her contempt and indifference. The little woman was timid and shy. I had watched the scene and as she turned away in a confused way, I stepped out into the aisle and asked if she had found what she wished. She said that the things were not just what she wanted and that she would look farther.

" 'I am sure we have what you want,' I said, and I brought her back and asked the clerk to display the articles again and we made the sale.

"All day my temper was on a hair-trigger and before the girls left that night I said to them: 'Here is something for you to sleep over: Gowns in style and hats in season are no criterion of the lady who wears them. From now on ladies in calico and ladies in laces receive

the same consideration at this counter on pain of losing your position.'

"These things brought their reward, for one evening the manager asked us to wait a few minutes and when he came he said: 'You girls have been doing some good work here and we are going to recognize it.' He raised our salaries all around.

"Close to us were the velvet goods. I had never had fine clothes and I did love them. I was frantic to get into that department just to handle the soft, rich cloth. I talked to the other girls and got all the facts about the goods, and I learned that the department was overstocked and a great advertising campaign had been put on to reduce it. There was a tremendous throng which crowded the store early in the morning and before noon it became a crush. The salesgirls were overwhelmed and I asked the manager if I could help.

" 'Do you know anything about velvet goods?' he asked.

" 'A little,' I replied.

" 'Come over and do what you can,' he said. 'Anyway, you can help keep the stock.'

"That is an event to be remembered as a girl remembers her first party. And you won't believe this when I tell you—but when we were checked up I stood fourth in the amount of

sales, and the others had the start of me one hour in the morning.

"Oh, Robert, Robert," she said to me, with the mist of tears swimming in her eyes, "you will never know the joy which made me burst into tears when I heard of it, because you have never been a poor, neglected, lonely, homely, freckled-faced little stranger, without a friend in a great city, and when the manager put me into the velvet goods department the next day, I could have hugged him for the bald-headed, ugly old dear that he was, only he never knew the danger he was in. And from that time I was always watching and studying the department I hoped to be promoted to, and within the year I was head saleswoman of the velvets.

"Meanwhile I had been working on myself, too. With the first increase in salary I went to a well-known physical director and asked her what I could do to improve my figure.

"She said: 'You can take physical exercise, which will put your shoulders back where they ought to be and make your carriage elastic and graceful, and you can train your hair, and clear your complexion and get rid of many of your freckles.'

"This is not a 'beauty talk,' " continued Winsome, "and I am not going to tell you all the things I did, but I did them as carefully and

persistently as I ever tried to sell a bill of goods and then the dressmaker did the rest and the result has brought some satisfaction." She smiled, blushing, as she glanced at me.

"In my new position I worked out the old methods and improved upon them with experience. The system brought large sales and no doubt drew the attention of my superiors, so that my salary was raised many times and I was promoted from one department and position to another, until I came to have a larger view of the great business of which I had become a part. But I had never seen the enterprise in its greatness until one Thanksgiving day when the store was closed and everybody was gone. I had come back late in the afternoon to get some business off my desk and when it was finished I sat there and gazed around the silent room, usually so noisy with busy customers. My idleness and the emptiness perhaps emphasized the size of the room and the building and I said: 'What a wonderful institution it is!' and I began to see for the first time the enormous investment involved and the heavy responsibility the managers carried. There were the great building and its costly fixtures and offices and the goods piled into story after story, and then a picture of the activities necessary to feed the big store came to me.

"There was a shelf of silk in front of me and I seemed to trace the pieces of fabric back, along the railway line through the looms and factories away back across the seas to the worms as they lay spinning their yarn in the shade of a leaf, far away.

"I saw the cotton on the shelf across the room, and my fancy followed it in transit through the factories in New England and back along the way it had come, through the compress and gin and then hanging in a million bolls in the white fields of the South, where negroes sang sweet melodies.

"I remembered, too, a consignment of furs which had been delivered the day before and my fancy took me back along the way to the snow-covered hills and forests where the trapper lies in wait for his prey, and where these same furs had been running around on four legs trying to dodge the ingenuity of men.

"Hour after hour I sat there tracing one line of goods after another back to their origin as they came from their native state, in all the secret places of nature and I said: 'All the expense of blunders and mistakes and accidents must be covered before we get the goods, and then after we have received them there are the fire-risk and soil-risk and out-of-season-risk,' and then I seemed to see the thousand careless

and thoughtless things which happen every day in every store in the land, which cause loss and waste to the owners. And for the first time in my business experience I saw how necessary it was to have a careful, thoughtful salesforce, who would not waste goods or time and who would prize every customer. And from that time I began to organize what I called the network system to prevent leakage and loss. In that day I saw the wholesale and retail systems of the world, with each store acting as a magnet, drawing what it needed from every corner of the earth—and all this amazing investment and energy invested for the single purpose: To sell, sell, sell! feeding the desires of the hungry millions who come to buy. I came to see that the selling of goods is the most important factor of the whole business world, and that salesmanship is a science, and that any one who learns it and keeps the pace will never come to want. From that day to this the passion for selling, selling, selling, has sung like a song in my heart.

"Then something happened which made me bless the day I had found myself in business. My father had died and for several years I had been sending money home to keep my mother and to educate my younger sister. I had never told anyone about my large success or salary.

But on this afternoon when I returned home I found a letter from my sister, saying that my mother was sick; that they were alarmed, and that mother had been unwilling to let me know, lest I should worry about her.

"Isn't that just like the mothers of the world, though, and don't they pour out their lives for their children from the day they are born? God bless them!

"I took the first train for home and consulted our physician before I went to the house. He said: 'Your mother must have an operation, and the sooner it is performed the better and safer it will be. She will require a specialist and it will be expensive.'

" 'How much?' I asked.

" 'Not less than $300.00 and maybe more.'

" 'All right, doctor,' I told him. 'Get everything ready at once.' Then I ran out home, where I had not been for several years, and the sight of my poor little mother, who had allowed herself to waste away rather than worry her prosperous daughter nearly broke my heart. I just gathered her up in my arms and rocked her and kissed her and crooned over her as if she had been my own child. She looked up at me from her tear-filled eyes, and then I broke down, in spite of my resolution not to, and we had a cry-feast together, with her cuddled in

my arms, which, in spite of the warning of the doctor, did us both good.

"The specialist came and did his work and took nearly five hundred dollars of my money away with him. But I never gave any money in my life with such joy in my heart, for he saved my mother's life and our happiness, and I rejoiced over the wise plan I had adopted upon the advice of an old salesman in the store. He had said to me one day when he noticed some little extravagance from my twelve dollars per week: 'Don't forget to save a little every day, daughter, for there will be a time when you will need it all.'

"Every girl and boy should learn it while young, for the time will come when life's happiness may hang in the balance and the little fund may tip the scale for joy and thanksgiving.

"I went back to my work when mother had recovered sufficiently. The evening of my return I was asked to dinner at a friend's house. The gracious courtesy of this friend of mine had always fascinated me. On this night she was more attractive than ever before, and I said to myself: 'What a saleswoman she would make. Customers would love her to distraction and work her to death.' And right there I forgot where I was and what I was there for.

The great idea had possessed me, that a saleswoman ought to be as charming as a hostess.

"I never knew when I went home or how I got there, but the next day I began to put my plan into operation. I said: 'I will train a department of saleswomen who will be as gracious and courteous and exquisite in manners as the most charming hostess in the city.' I went to a lady whose business it was to take the most unsophisticated people and work them over and train them to positions of wealth and refinement, and then I took my own selling force and trained them until they had the grace and refinement of the best-bred people. It was all done for the single purpose of making our customers enjoy the service we rendered them.

"One never can tell what little things may grow into or what influence they may have upon one's whole life.

"One morning the general manager asked me to come to his office. As I entered I saw that there were other prominent officers of the Company there also. When I was seated, the manager drew from his desk a long sheet of paper and then said: 'Miss Winsome, we want some information about your department. What have you done to increase your sales to such abnormal proportions? At first we thought they were only spasmodic, but they have continued

to exceed anything in this store and we think in any store.'

" 'Have they been entirely satisfactory?' I asked.

" 'Highly satisfactory,' he answered.

" 'Then,' I said, 'it is a little secret of mine and I would rather keep it.'

"He frowned at first, then smiled and asked: 'Is it something which could be fitted to every department?'

" 'I think so,' I said.

" 'Here is a compact, then,' he said. 'Tell us what it is, and if you can apply it in the Cloak Department with the success you have in your department, we will make you manager of that department when Miss Marlow leaves us in the spring. And you shall begin at her salary.'

" 'That is fair enough,' I said, 'and I will show you how simple it has been. I have convinced my selling force that all advertising of the store is simply an invitation, and that all the customers who accept the invitation of a store are the guests of the store, and that every woman clerk is a hostess, and that she ought to have all the sweetness and charm and winsome manner of a hostess receiving guests. We have been in training not only to know goods and customers, but to know the best social manners and usage.

" 'I became convinced that no unrefined people would take offense at the kindest and most thoughtful courtesy and that many refined people would appreciate it, and we have done this with the distinct understanding that there should be no discrimination between the richest and the poorest customers who come to our counters. You may have noticed that in our department:

" 'No one wears a frowsy garment, even if of the cheapest material.

" 'No one has unkempt hair.

" 'No one lounges ungracefully about the counters.

" 'No one gives a sharp retort.

" 'No one uses slang.

" 'No one chews gum in the face of a customer.

" 'We have attempted to be the most gracious hostesses to the Guests of The House.'

"They sat and looked at me a long while, those hard-headed directors whose business it was to direct the destinies of the great store.

"After a while one of them grunted and said: 'Simple enough, but no one but a woman would have found it.'

"They kept their agreement and more. They didn't make me manager and buyer of the Cloak Department, but they made me assistant sales manager of the Company.

"And that has been our custom, to make our customers the Guests of the House. We have extended our courtesies farther and farther and the business has grown beyond our wildest dreams, and yet these courtesies have been abused sometimes in ways you would never believe. One of the customs we adopted was to send goods to the house and even out of town to be inspected. It was understood, of course, that a reasonable length of time should be given for the examination and decision. But some of these guests, whose honor we have trusted for fair treatment in return for the courtesy shown, have kept the goods many days and have sometimes worn them and have returned them to us soiled, with the message that they were not quite what they wanted. This abuse has developed until goods have been kept for weeks and then returned to us soiled and unsalable. Others have taken the goods out only to pattern the style and then have returned them; and a few days later they would appear in the store dressed in a duplicate of the gown or hat they had borrowed, and still others have come to the store or phoned in for us to deliver a spool of thread or a ribbon worth perhaps not more than five cents and the delivery of it would cost us from five to fifteen cents.

"When we have figured these extravagant

favors and have found what an addition they have made in our expense account, we have drawn long faces and we have been d scussing the necessity of restricting our hospitality, because this abuse by a small proportion of our customers and guests works an njustice to us and to the very great number who appreciate every courtesy we have been able to show them. So I feel sure that there will be a custom adopted of determining the minimum sale for which free delivery will be granted, and also that there is certain to be, sooner or later, a restriction to a few days for the examination and selection of any article sent out to the homes.

"But when we think of the great multitude whom we have served, and who in turn have served us, it fills us with a glow of kindness. They have been lovely and have made the great store the success it has become, and we in turn have given them a greater variety for their selection and a greater value for their money. By housing many departments in one building and under one management, we reduce expenses and buy cheaper, and any customer who trades with us regularly will find that his family will live better with no additional cost. When a store gets the spirit we have developed, it becomes a joyous place to live and work, and the purpose of living is changed until giving the best service

and helping your guests to better things becomes one's loftiest ambition, and if it isn't religion it is very much like it. It develops the character of those who sell and it gives help and happiness to all the Guests of the House, who buy.

"To learn the most fastidious tastes of our patrons; to choose the goods they will want for their homes; to gather these things from all the ends of the earth; to offer the best quality for the lowest price; to render a courtesy and service which excel all competition, and to prosper ourselves because we make our customers prosper:

"This is almost the genius of Joy.

"This is the blessed bliss of Big Business."

She stopped a minute and looked at me; then she said: "Well, Robert, that is my story. It's simple, isn't it?"

"Yes, it's simple," I said, "with all the simplicity of genius, and something that every store and clerk and customer ought to hear, and I want to print it without your name."

It took me a long while, but I got her consent at last. I was about to go out when we heard the front door open.

"There comes the wild animal now who keeps me in subjection," she laughed, as she went out to meet her husband.

THE STRANGER'S STORY

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THE campaign was on. The weather was hot and men were hotter. The thermometer had stood at 105° in the shade all day. The sky was blue. A few filmy clouds floated lazily against the azure above. There was no hope or sign of rain. But the crops looked fine. The cotton wore a black green, grassy garment, and the feed crop was assured. Texas was in its glory—a promising cotton crop, plenty of feed, and hot weather by day, with nights as cool and delicious as winds from the sea.

This is the season when the moral and spiritual life of Texas comes to the boiling point. There is no religious fever in this great state when the wind blows cold or when the air is damp or wet. It is in the summer time that the people hold their great revivals of religion in tents or under the revival sheds, built with a roof but with open sides, in the church grounds, and in political years it is during this time that political enthusiasm grows with a frenzy.

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The conditions were perfect. The Drys and the Wets were at their best. The issues were plain, but the results were uncertain, and the arguments had finally centered in a life and death struggle around that "last ditch" sentiment, of "personal liberty to eat and drink as I please."

I sat on the broad veranda of a south Texas hotel looking out on the bay. It was a Saturday afternoon, and men began to gather to spend Sunday—and everybody talked politics. You were a Wet or a Dry. You drank whiskey or you drank water, and you didn't dilute either.

Among the guests were eight young traveling men. They were a good illustration of the sentiment of the state. Four were Wets and four were Drys. They were uncompromising and bitter. They disposed of their grips, registered, then came out and took chairs to catch the delicious wind from the water, but still discussing the absorbing theme. There was one, stronger than the others. He was a Wet. He had better use of his head and his arguments and illustrations were strong. He was fluent and clever and vicious and sometimes profane. The arguments were lurid at times. Many people turned to listen and some came close and occasionally took part in the conversation.

It was much easier to get in than it was to get out, which is true of many things.

There was one, though, who watched and listened intently. He said nothing, but sometimes smiled. He was forty or forty-five, perhaps. He seemed to be a stranger. No one spoke to him. But I noticed that the aggressive Wet often directed his conversation his way, as if to challenge him. But the stranger did not bite.

At six-thirty the supper bell rang and we went into the dining-room. It happened that the eight young men and the stranger and myself were at a long table together. The argument continued until we were served, when it was interrupted, but it started up again as soon as we began to have our hunger satisfied; and then we filed out to the veranda and drank that delicious evening breeze, as sweet as the odor of apple blossoms.

Did you ever taste the cool night air that comes over the southland just as the sun goes down?

And so the stage was set for politics, and as the evening grew cooler, the argument grew hotter, until about forty men had become involved in some degree, but the leader still was the fluent and aggressive Wet. He got up and walked back and forth, his hands slipped tightly into his hip pockets, and finally repeated this

challenge: "I'd like to have someone, anyone, give me just one sane reason why he should have the right to order and stipulate what I shall eat or drink, or why I should have the right to do the same for him."

He stopped before the Stranger, and taking his right hand from his pocket and pointing a finger close to the Stranger's face, he continued: "Old man, what have you got to say about it? You have listened to all of the arguments and haven't said a word. There isn't any middle ground. You are a Wet or a Dry. Which are you, and why?"

The Stranger smiled at the young fellow and then replied: "Yes, I have my own opinion—but I never allow myself to become involved in a controversy. I am going to make a proposition though. If you will agree not to try to drag me into an argument when I am through, I will tell you a story. But I will argue neither for nor against it when it is finished."

The young man agreed. The Stranger looked at the circle of men around him. They approved also.

"Well," the Stranger continued, "I am a Dry and I will tell you why. You have asked for one reason why anyone should be given the privilege to order my food or drink. I have a reason which satisfies me.

"My father died when I was five years old. My mother was very poor. She took work of many kinds from the neighbors to support us, for I had brothers and sisters and only two old enough to help. In the north we can't live as you can live here, where something is growing nearly all of the year, and you have all summer and no winter. We have to work continually to hold the winters at bay. The life of poor people in the north is a tragedy which you can never understand down here.

"My father died in the spring. We got along pretty well with our garden during the summer, but when fall came it was a problem which only a mother could solve or would try to solve. But we had raised about sixty bushels of potatoes, and Mother had about a hundred bushels of coal in the coal-house, and we all crowded into the kitchen at night and kept only the cook stove fire going, though we were a large family.

"Well, one night in November when it had turned cold, and the wind was howling around our little house, and we had to keep the old stove red to warm our room, which was on the west side of the house, we heard a step on the porch. Then someone knocked and we little fellows all crowded behind Mother, as she opened the door. There stood a stranger in United States soldier uniform—the old blue

pattern. He smiled and held out his hand, but mother didn't take it. He laughed, then said,

" 'Don't you know me? Why, Flora, it's Dan.'

"Then my mother recognized him. She threw her arms around him and kissed him. It was her youngest brother. He had been a soldier during the Civil War. After the war was over he had enlisted again and had been in the west fighting Indians. He seemed to bear a charmed life. He never had a wound. He was a happy scamp and lovable—everybody liked Uncle Dan. He had been nearly all over the world. He had good stories for every occasion. We had heard of him from old soldiers. He was a great fighter and used to laugh while he fought, they said. That is the kind that never knows when it is whipped.

"It was late that night when we got to bed. Uncle Dan, the soldier! Why, he was a hero and a knight to us who had never been outside of the town where we lived.

"Well, the next day he stayed around the house all day, and along in the afternoon he said to my mother, 'Flora, do you think you can make room for me to stay with you?'

"Mother didn't say anything for a good while, and then she said, 'I don't know, Dan. Our family is large and our house is small.'

" 'Don't you want me?' he asked in a hurt voice.

" 'I don't know, Dan. That would depend upon a good many things.'

"He sat quiet, and didn't say anything, just looking at the floor.

" 'You see, Dan,' my mother continued, 'you haven't lived as you should have lived. You used to drink and swear and gamble, and maybe you have done other things. I have a large family. My boys have no father to set an example for them now. It is going to be a great problem to raise them all to be good men. I don't quite know how I could face this task alone, if I did not have the Bible and could not go to God every day to get the help I need. You have that happy, amiable nature which would make the boys love you. They are all wild about you now, and if your influence is not good, you would destroy all that I am trying to do. I have to think of my children first.'

"He told her that he had reformed, that he had returned home to take up a sober life and try to make some money before he was old.

"My mother was not easily swayed. I never knew a steadier head than hers, and she had more courage than any man when her children were concerned. She didn't allow him to per-

suade her. She only said, 'You stay until you can look around and I will think it over.'

"He did seem to be in earnest and every day they talked about his coming to make his home with us, and finally Mother said, 'All right, Dan. If you are in earnest you may come and stay. We are crowded and it will be inconvenient for you and for us, but if you want to live a good life, you are welcome to a home as long as we have a roof over our heads. You can pay two dollars per week, just about what the food costs, and I will do your washing and mending.'

"Within a couple of days he found work. He came home early each night and was sober and helpful around the house. He seemed in earnest and saved his money, and got good clothes, and used to go to church with us every Sunday; and my mother found a little happiness in her sad life, by watching and encouraging him, and we boys loved him. Such tales as he told have never been written in any book. They were as vivid as red blood from a new wound, and his laugh would make you happy as far as it could carry. Those nights around the old cook stove in the kitchen were as wonderful to us as the Arabian Nights and Robinson Crusoe could have been to more fortunate boys in cosier homes than ours.

"By spring he had saved about $125 and had paid his board every week. One day he bought a team and wagon, and began to dray around town. He did well from the start and soon had his outfit paid for and was making about $60 a month clear of expenses. We lived in the corn country and that year was a great corn year. Uncle Dan took in a partner and bought a corn sheller. They did an immense business, and met their payments on the sheller promptly. They worked early and late, and often moved from one farm to another at night to save time, and they were making lots of money for unskilled laborers.

"But among the farmers there were some who kept whiskey at home. They offered Uncle Dan some. But at first he just laughed and held fast to his promises to Mother. Then one day he broke over, and after that he drank whenever it was offered.

"My mother heard of it. It broke her heart. But when around home, he was still sober. Mother talked to him and he would promise, but we heard of his lapses more and more frequently, until the shelling season was over. Then he came back home and started to drive his dray and for a while he was his old self again. Then he began to spend his evenings in town and sometimes came home late with

the odor of liquor on his breath. He drank more and more until the winter went by and spring came, and one Saturday night he got drunk and didn't come home at all until Monday morning. That was the beginning of the end.

"In our town, men with teams had many calls to plow gardens. Uncle Dan had. Very early, as soon as the frost was out of the ground, Mother had asked him to plow ours. Our living depended upon a good garden. He neglected it from day to day and generally came home under the influence of liquor. Mother, fearing that her garden might be late, called in Dave Briggs one day as he was going by to plow it for us.

"He had just finished and had driven away when Uncle Dan drove up, and this time, of course, had the plow in his wagon to do the job. He was drunker than usual, and when he saw the garden plowed, he exploded in a frenzy of anger. Mother and some of the children were working in the freshly turned soil, close to the house. Uncle Dan broke loose with such a flood of abusive profanity as would have disgraced a pirate crew.

"Mother tried quietly to explain the necessity of having our garden in early. He only became the more furious and cursed in such

language as must have blistered his tongue. I was hanging in terror, a seven-year-old child, to Mother's dress. Mother said, 'Dan, you must stop right now. I can't allow such language before my children.'

"He raised his fist and shook it. I thought he was going to strike her. I flew at him in childish rage, and beat and bit him on the leg. My mother pulled me away and sent me in the house. I watched through the window. He was still cursing like a mad man and he threatened to kill her.

"I fled up stairs terrified and ran to a little closet where Uncle Dan's army musket was kept. It was always loaded, because sometimes we would get a cotton-tail rabbit for supper by having the gun ready, but it never had a cap on. I snatched it up from the corner where it leaned, got a cap from the cap box and tried to put it on the tube. I knew how it was done, for I had seen my brothers and Uncle Dan do it many times, but I was not strong enough to pull the hammer back with one hand. I was only a baby, but I was crazed about my mother's danger. I dragged the musket to the window and put the end of the barrel on the window sill. Then I raised the butt end of the stock against my stomach and took both hands and pulled the hammer back

and put on the cap. I looked out of the window. Uncle Dan was still cursing as if he were damning a harlot. The foulest language of the camp and saloons poured in torrents from him.

"I knew how to sight a gun, for my brothers had showed me, but they had never allowed me to hold it. I lifted the stock to my breast and put my little hand inside the guard in front of the trigger and sighted down the barrel and swayed from side to side until I had my uncle covered.

"I meant to kill him. Why I did not pull the trigger then, God knows. But a neighbor who had heard the abuse a block away came into the yard and led my uncle toward the wagon and Mother started toward the house.

"Then it happened. I must have pulled the trigger unconsciously, for the gun went off and bored a hole in the coal shed as big as a walnut and kicked me across the room with all the breath knocked out of me. I would have killed them both if it had happened ten seconds sooner, and we would have been orphans and I would have been a murderer, with the blood of my own mother and my uncle on my hands. It has haunted me for nearly forty years. Sometimes to this day, I waken in the night drenched with a cold sweat when I dream of it.

"Gentlemen, that is my story, and in it is my

"I lifted the stock to my breast and put my little hand inside the guard"

reason for wishing to prevent my Uncle Dan and every other Uncle Dan in the world from using liquor, whether he wants to or not."

He stopped. Every face was white and our muscles were tense. It was a tragic scene. As the story had unfolded to the climax, not a man had moved. Not one of us had taken our eyes from the Stranger's face, and at the last we held our breath as we saw the baby at the upstairs window with an army musket, sighting along the barrel to commit murder.

The silence was broken after a while by the aggressive young man who had given the challenge. "Good God," he said, "just a baby trying to protect his mother from the drunken brute. Why, why," he choked, "I have a little chap just that age. He is only a baby and goes to sleep in his mother's lap."

Then he turned to the Stranger and held out his hand. "I don't blame you for being a Dry. Why, I'd be as Dry as Hell if I'd gone through a thing like that. There isn't an argument in the world that can answer it."

Then he threw back his head and with the old defiance, he said, "Gentlemen, listen to me. I am Dry too from this hour. What good is our philosophy if it doesn't protect the mother and her babies? They are about all we have. Why, why," he stammered, "I'd have as much right

to burn the house over them while they sleep as to fill their hearts with fear and terror. It is queer how many kinds of a damned fool a man will be just to justify a theory or an argument."

He stood still, and no one moved for several minutes while he looked out at the white caps breaking on the beach, and then he continued, as if talking to himself. "Good God!" he said, with more of reverence than profanity, "only a baby like little George, Jr., at home. Just a baby fighting with a madman to protect his mother. There isn't an answer in the world to that."

WHAT WILL A FATHER GIVE FOR HIS SONS?

WHAT WILL A FATHER GIVE FOR HIS SONS?

I WAS not yet twenty years of age and had lived much as other boys had lived before me. I hadn't been very careful or considerate, but a few years ago something happened which lifted a curtain on life and let me look at the naked soul of a Good Man. It was a tragedy and a glory. My spirit has been enthralled and awed ever since, and I hope that its influence will never leave me to the last day of my life. The more I think of it the more awful and wonderful it seems.

I wonder if other boys have ever seen the naked soul of a Good Man when he takes God's hand and leads Him into the private room of his life and talks with Him. All the vestments of his usual manner fall away. He attempts to conceal nothing. He takes every secret from its hiding place and lays it before his Father. He excuses nothing. He dodges no responsibility. He does not have any fear for himself. He talks to God about every act and deed as if he knows he is being understood; and as if he understands, too, that there can be no compro-

mise, and that he must be prepared to pay the full price for each boon he asks.

The strange scene seemed normal, yet abnormal; natural, yet uncanny; simple, yet colossal—as if the world and destiny and God Himself were in some way involved in the solution of this Good Man's problems. I can see it all as I saw it then, but the scene is too large for me to express in words. It was sublime. Maybe I cannot make you see it, but I shall tell you in my simple way all that I saw and what happened.

And the Man, I think that he will not resent this story when he sees it. The Man—the Good Man—will understand because he is my father and he will understand me as his Father understood him, I think.

My father was close to the president as an official in a large railway company. His position compelled him to attend to many important affairs during the absence of his chief. His office adjoined the president's office at the end of the long hall.

The president had been in Europe many weeks, and my father had worked long hours each day. One night when it was almost time to go home I slipped into Father's office. He was in the president's room working over his papers, and did not hear me enter. I kept

"Then he knelt by the large office chair and put his face in his hands"

quiet, thinking I would surprise him. But he did not come out. The rooms seemed very still. The outer offices had emptied at five o'clock. It was getting dark, but the city lights streamed in through the windows. After awhile I peered through the crack of the door; Father was standing at the window looking down upon the city far below him. I was about to run and grab him, when something in his attitude arrested my attention. I stood as still as he, watching him. After a while he removed his hat and dropped it on a chair beside him; then he lifted his face to the stars which were coming out in the heavens. It gave me a strange feeling, as if I were watching a silent tragedy. He stood that way a long time, and to me, watching, the whole world seemed to be revolving around him. I held my breath. Then he knelt by the large office chair and put his face in his hands and began to pray very simply:

"My Father, I want to talk to you awhile before I go home to the little mother who is waiting and the boys who, I hope, are with her. It is about the boys that I need advice and wisdom. They are getting away from us and the wholesome habits we have formed. You know all the struggles and sins and mistakes of my own life. You know what they have cost me and the price I have had to pay for them,

but when I found You I found Life with its wonderful blessings. I have hidden nothing from You. You know what violence of anger I had to overcome. You know what an appetite burned within me. You know what passions tried to drive me. You know the other woman who would have enticed me down the dark path which leads to the Rivers of Sorrow. You turn the pages of my life like the pages of a book—not one thing is hidden from You, and yet You are my Friend. And You know the little woman with the heart of an angel who has given her love to me, and all that she has been to me through the passing years. And now I come to You with our great joy and our great sorrow—the children. We love them, I think sometimes even as You have loved us. Our blood runs in their veins. They must be our happiness or our despair. In them we live or die. For them we pray and toil and for them we would make any sacrifice and suffer any pain, even as the little mother suffered when they came to us. And we would suffer with a great joy because we love them with a great love. Now, Father, this is the problem which I bring to You for the little mother and myself. What is it we must do to lead the boys back and start them on the King's Highway?

"What price must we pay for this priceless

privilege of being a father and mother? What sacrifices must we make in order to lead them close to You so that they may learn to love You? What ransom must we deliver to the world to prove the great love we have for them? Are many comforts spoiling the fineness of their natures? Then, Father, take from us all that we have and keep us very poor.

"If pride is marring them, then, O Father, make us humble in Your own way. Maybe they have not had sorrow enough to make them see the Shining Light of the Way of Life; then give them the sorrow necessary to make them see. Maybe they must learn the strength which comes from the tragic battle for bread. Then, O Father of mine, give them the battle!

"Maybe they have been harbored too much. Perhaps there may have to be sickness or death in their training school for life. They are on the wrong highway. The end cannot bring the glory of love which we find in serving You. They must be brought back at any cost—not as a punishment, but as a blessing. I must have neglected them somewhere along the way. Except what they must pay themselves, let me pay the price, whatever it may be, for my neglect. If the cost must be sickness or accident, let me bear it to win them to You. If it must be the shock of death, let me bear that, too. They

would have no compass of life without the little mother to love them.

"And death, why should I fear death? Are You not within it and around it and beyond it to walk with me all the way? Did not Jesus lay down his life for His friends and His enemies? And shall I not lay down my life gladly, too, for my own boys? My Father, You know my heart. I love You. I love You. You know that I love You. If necessary, grant to me this privilege, my Father, to lay down my life for my sons. To give my life is such a little thing for me to give, if through it the boys shall find that to serve You is the highest happiness and greatest joy."

I couldn't hear any more. I slipped out of the door and ran—ran until I was breathless. Father came home after a while. He seemed the same, except a rare glow was upon his face.

Early that night I coaxed Harry to go to bed. When we were alone, I told him all that I had seen and heard, and how Father had prayed that God might let him give his life for us, as Jesus had done for the world. Harry was two years younger than I. He threw his arms around me and sobbed. We talked it all over for a long time, then we kneeled by the bed and prayed. We talked to God as Father had, and told Him we would make any sacrifice, and go with Him anywhere He would show us,

and that we wanted to grow to make our father and mother as proud of us as we were of them. And now we have learned what a wonderful thing it was that Father offered to do for us: to lay down his life for his sons.

THE DOCTOR'S FIGHT

THE DOCTOR'S FIGHT

THERE were ten of us making the journey by boat up the river. We had been in the dining-room for supper, and when we came on deck we took chairs near the rail and looked out over the waters. The moon was rising. It was almost full, and flooded the world with its glory. There were music and dancing. It was a night for love and laughter and many songs.

We were older men—past forty—and sat a little apart. We watched the happy scene of youth for an hour or two, saying little among ourselves. Nine of these men had come to the city in young manhood and had known each other intimately for fifteen or twenty years. My acquaintance had been shorter.

After a long silence one of the men said, pointing toward the scene of festivity: "Let them laugh while they can. They don't know yet where tragedy sleeps. This night reminds me of one like it when I was young and in the midst of our joy the ship went down."

We were curious, and so he told us the story with all the details of his miraculous escape. This was the first of many stories of adventure and danger which followed.

Among us was a well-known doctor. He was tall and strong and straight, with a keen eye, clear-cut features, and iron gray hair. He was interested, but showed no inclination to give us a chapter from his life. The others noticed it and began to call for a story. He smiled and shook his head. The wit of the crowd exclaimed: "What can a doctor tell us about danger and adventure? The worst weapon he knows is the carving knife of the dissecting room, and he won't use that until his attendants put the man to sleep and bind him, and then the great surgeon—like the captain of a pirate crew—steps up and cuts the victim to pieces and sews him up and makes off with a thousand dollars in plunder which he takes from a man when he is down, and everything is covered up by his profession and the law. The medical profession is the only brand of brigands we have left still honored by the populace and the State."

We all laughed.

And the doctor said: "It is true that I haven't had those popular adventures which you have had, but no one sees more of pathos and tragedy and heroism than the practicing physician. I know many stories, but they belong to my patients and I am not at liberty to tell them. The great tragedies are not those which are cabled

around the world and fill the newspapers and appall the people who read them. The great tragedies are those which occur in the home or in the personal life of individuals and are fought out in silence to the end, whatever the end may be."

He stopped and looked at us a minute and then continued tentatively: "There is one which I might tell. No one knows the details except my wife and myself. I hesitate to relate it because there are so many things in it which marred the body and scarred the soul. It is almost like going to hell and coming back after exploring all the mysteries of that strange land. The only reason for telling it at all is for the good it may do. We are old friends and I know that you will pardon the personal intimacy involved."

We begged for the story.

"Well," he continued, "when I first began practice it was very slow, but much to the surprise of everyone who knew me, when it did come it came fast, and while I was still young I had a very large business. Many of my cases required a surgeon, and so I began to study and practice surgery. Fortune favored me and soon I had more than one man ought to carry. A friend of mine warned me against the danger of overwork.

" 'Nothing can break a constitution made in a cornfield,' I told him.

"But mine broke.

"The first symptoms were in a strange weariness. I became drowsy. I was sleepy all of the time. Then my sleep became light and there were dreams, always dreams. Then sleep began to desert me, until I could sleep only from eleven till one. Then I would lie awake until morning, while my head would throb and ache with the hot blood which my heart had pumped into it during the long hours of the night to feed the brain which had never stopped its thinking.

"This was only the beginning.

"Up to this time in serious operations my mind would become luminous and my hand was as steady as a hunter's. My success was astonishing, and this brought more practice and increased my burden.

"Then another phase of nerve-sickness came to me. I began to have hallucinations. Calamities were impending from every quarter. I was like a criminal who has committed some black deed in the night and knows that the whole world is looking for him. Only in the operating-room was I free.

"But after the operations—! Ah, then—!

"Away from my work my home was my sal-

vation. My wife had always had a restful quality for me even before marriage. She had developed many more charms as a wife and a mother of three children. I was proud of her and of them, and yet one night I came home and said and did things which ought never to have been forgiven.

"Then I entered that other room of nerve-sickness. It is the room of secrecy and solitude, where a man has come to fear himself. I had lost my self-control. I loathed myself, and one night before going home, in desperation I took a hypodermic injection of morphine. It was my first.

"That night when I wakened I remembered what I had done and I saw the ruin of my life before me. I did not sleep. I fought my enemies until the morning dawned. My body was tender and sore and my head was throbbing with hot blood. I got up and took a cold bath and went down to breakfast.

"There is no tragedy in human life like this secret fear within yourself. You will tell no one. You defend it as if it were a gem of great worth. You live in terror lest it be discovered.

"Have you been in a hotel fire when all the stories below you were in flames?

"Has a secret enemy sent you a message,

that within three days or five he will shoot you from ambush, in the back?

"Have you had leprosy?

"Have you had a son who has become a thief?

"Have you had a daughter become infatuated with a libertine?

"These things are terrible. They are frightful. They are colossal. They are monstrous.

"But they are not overwhelming. You still have hope. You hope that you may alight in the net one hundred feet below when you jump from the window. You hope that your enemy may miss his mark. You hope that your physician may find a remedy for the leprosy. You hope that your son may return to honor. You hope that your daughter may withstand her lover.

"But when your diseased nerves turn you against yourself you are filled with despair. You cannot run from yourself. You cannot hide. You go to bed with this monster stitched up within your skin. You awaken with it. You eat your breakfast and your luncheon and your dinner with it. You work with it. It is as close to you as the blood in your veins or the thought in your mind.

"Despair is the Deluge of Calamity.

"It rains from the skies.

"It rises from the earth.

"It surrounds you.

"It submerges you.

"There is no hope, there is only fear of this madman roaming within the realms of the mind.

"Religion cannot hold it.

"Philosophy cannot lead it.

"The laws of the land cannot restrain it.

"Only health can chain it. But it has conquered health. You are sick.

"The madman sits in the throne-room of reason.

"You are at war with yourself. You fear everything within yourself.

"You are a craven. You are a coward and yet each day you fight this madman with a desperation of valor never displayed on the field of battle.

"A man without hope. A man submerged by Despair! This is the Cataclysm. This is the Ultimate Ruin.

"I lived in hell.

"One day I opened a drawer where a revolver had been placed. I picked it up. It fascinated me. I opened it and saw the little messengers of death lying snug in their chambers. I closed it and turned around. My nurse was sitting at a table with her back to me. I had the impulse to lift the weapon and fire. I saw the whole scene. I would pull the trigger. The blood

would spurt from the back of her head. She would fall limply on the floor. People would rush in. The police would be called. I would be taken to jail. There would be a hearing. I would be returned to jail without bond. There would be a scandal because of the woman. The city would be shocked. My family would be prostrated.

"Men and women would talk. They would say: 'It is terrible. We are sorry for the doctor's family. It is hard to believe. The doctor has always borne a good reputation, but you never can tell. And Miss ——, the young woman, she has always seemed a lady, but ——.' And so they would talk and condemn her and condemn me and not one would know that it was the madman who had got control in a moment when I was off my guard.

"Suddenly the nurse turned and looked at me. I asked quietly to whom the revolver belonged. She told me. 'He ought not to leave it loaded,' I said, and replaced it in the drawer.

"From that day I was terrified at the sight of anything which I could use as a weapon. The next morning I started to shave myself as I had always done. Suddenly the impulse came to let the blade slip at the jugular vein. I was looking at it with this in mind when I heard the voice of my wife in the adjoining room

talking baby talk to the baby. I put the razor away and never shaved afterward in those days.

"If I were near an incoming train I had the impulse to throw myself under it or shove some one else under and watch the ghastly scene.

"I began to be afraid of my surgical instruments—those blades tempered finer than Damascus steel and sharper than a flame of fire. In my mind they were becoming weapons of destruction and violence.

"One morning I wakened at twelve forty-five and began to think of an operation booked for ten o'clock. I could see all the complications which might arise, but I followed it through in my mind to a successful conclusion. It was a very critical operation and required the greatest skill and precision. At the very crisis the slightest deviation of the instrument might prove fatal. This critical phase kept recurring to my mind until I seemed to see the knife slip.

"Morning came. I called a well-known surgeon to help me. I had never feared an operation before. The more skill required, the more I had enjoyed it. I started with the work, but as I approached the crisis my courage failed and I handed the knife to my friend and stepped aside.

"There is nothing so fatal to the surgeon as timidity or fear.

"I went to my office and turned my patients over to my assistant. I locked myself in my private room and all day as well as a sick man can, I went over my affairs. I read my will. I figured all my loans. I examined my insurance policies. I had my books balanced. I had a report on my bank account. I looked at my whole life and saw its remarkable success and its complete failure. I was under forty and I was insane with sickness. This was to be the last day.

"I wrote a letter of instructions to my attorney, and a letter of love to my wife, and about the time I usually left the office I called her by 'phone and told her that I would not be home that night. There was no more fear. Everything was settled. Disease had triumphed at last.

"I had always had some religion. I hadn't practiced it very well. No man is practicing a sane religion when he is bartering his health for wealth or influence. It is like swapping diamonds for sawdust. But in that last hour I knelt in my office and thanked the Lord for allowing me to come to the end without leaving the stain of crime upon my name and family. I sat quietly for a long time, and then a longing to see my wife and children once more came over me.

"I started toward her, but stopped"

"I went out home and let myself into the house without noise, then I went stealthily up the heavily carpeted stairs and stepped into the room where the children lay. I looked at them a long while, then I kissed each one. There were tears in my eyes and an ache in my throat. I looked into my wife's room. She was not on the bed. She was kneeling beside it with her hands clasped in front of her, praying. I loved her in that moment more than I had ever loved her. Soon she began to sob, and raising her face she cried with a passionate, almost noiseless cry: 'Oh, my Father in Heaven, show me how to save my lover and my husband and bring him back from the sickness which is upon him. I have called to You a thousand times and You have promised to answer my prayer.'

"Then she broke down and with her face in her hands she sobbed as if her life, too, had been submerged in desolation.

"I started toward her, but stopped. I slipped out into the hall and down the stairs and opened the door and closed it with the usual noise and called to her softly. She came down in her night dress, her hair falling about her face and shoulders, and threw herself into my arms, still sobbing.

"So the end was not yet.

"My wife kept me at home and sent for the best nerve specialist in the city.

" 'Rest, rest, rest,' he said. 'Rest and travel.'

"My wife was not willing to let me go abroad unless she could go, too, and the baby was too young for such a journey. She followed the specialist down stairs and asked if there were not some way for me to recuperate at home.

" 'Yes,' he said. 'Your husband can if he will, but he won't. Homesickness abroad kills as many as the travel cures. Home is the place for any sick man if he will eliminate all of his business and professional interests.'

" 'I'll see to that,' my wife assured him.

" 'All right,' he said. 'If you will see to that I'll see to the rest of it. There isn't any organic disease, and we shall bring your doctor through if you will take out the telephone and place a big Irishman with a basket-full of brickbats in the front yard.'

"My wife followed instructions. She took out the 'phone, disconnected the door bell, and took the Irishman's place herself. Not a friend or foe could get past her.

"Now that I was away from my work and saw no one, a strange lassitude came over me. I felt as if all the blood had been drained from my body. On the third morning a young man came to the house. He was a perfect specimen

of health. He was the physical director of the Young Men's Christian Association. The doctor had sent him to arrange some light physical exercises. I was too languid to have any interest, but my wife saw that I followed instructions. After a while I was using dumbbells and Indian clubs and wall weights. Then young Baker began calling for me at eight in the morning. We went to the gym, where I took exercise on the track, and when I had finished my run I would take a plunge and go home with my wife, who always came for me. These were the new tactics against the madman. This was the 'last ditch' fight for life.

"At the end of the month I asked the director what I owed him. 'Not a thing,' he said. 'If it has been worth anything to you, you may take out a membership in the Association. This is God's Training School. It is a much better preventative than it is a cure.

" 'No one ever caught nervous prostration in a gymnasium and not many can keep it if they come here.

" 'We are like a great music house which builds up and repairs and tunes every instrument brought to it. Only our instruments are men, and we would much rather keep them in tune than to take an old broken-down instrument which has been banged and battered for

twenty years. Did you know that the soul will get out of tune in a sick body, Doctor? Well, we have a repair shop for the soul, too. Some morning when you are on the track, if you will listen you will hear God walking through the building. Maybe He will take a few laps by your side, as He has many times with me, and some time when you get stronger, when the blood is coursing freely through your veins and your mind is clear and hope begins to shine within you, maybe He will speak to you as a Great Father speaks to a good son, and don't forget, Doctor, that the Great God is a God of Health as well as a God of Love.

" 'Health is God's breath in the body as Love is God's breath in the soul.'

"I came to enjoy the gymnasium as I had never enjoyed any exercise in my life. In the summer I played tennis and golf, but with the first chilly weather I was in the gym again. My strength was coming back. My body was getting stronger every day. Health was driving sickness from all of its lairs. My will was gaining its old vigor and my mind was keen and clear, and I said, 'I am going to be a strong man once more.'

"One day I was riding with my wife's pastor and I seemed to see the world with a vision which I had never had before, and I said to him:

"'What chance has the sick man in the struggle of life?

"'How will the blind man paint for the gallery?

"'How will the mute woman sing for the multitude?

"'How will the dyspeptic cook for the king?

"'How will the hysterical preacher feed the minds of strong men?

"'How will the doctor shaken by disease treat the patient?

"'How will the sick judge dispense justice?

"'How will the business man with jangling nerves succeed in business?

"'How will the man fighting wild beasts within himself win the woman he loves, or love the woman he wins, or be a sane father to his children?'

"And yet we have sick people in this city and in every other city; hundreds of thousands of them—who could be strong if they would be, by the simple method of exercise to prevent disease and to build up the body when it has been abused and weakened. If people could know the value in health and joy from exercise there would be fifty gymnasiums in this town and every one crowded and with a waiting list. They would be more popular than picture shows.

"Well, the day before I was ready to resume my practice I was taking my usual exercise and I was thinking of how the Good Lord had blessed me. My whole being was filled with thanksgiving, when I seemed to feel a presence as of some one near and a voice said to me as plainly as if you were speaking: 'Blessed is the man whose wife has loved him in the days of disaster.'

"I hurried through my exercise, took my plunge and went home. I found my wife and put my arm around her and kissed her and told her all that had happened. She didn't say a word, but looked at me as though she would devour me while she led me into the library and then she said: 'Oh, John, this is the answer to all of my prayers. For three years I have prayed that God would bring you back to health, and now you are well. Let us thank Him for His kindness.'

"We knelt there side by side with her hand in mine and offered our gratitude to the good Lord for walking with us through the Valley of Dark Shadows and bringing us home.

"When we arose we looked at each other with smiles and for the first time I saw the lines of care in her face and then I seemed to see her as she was, the rarest little woman in the world, with more courage than a soldier.

The past came before me and I knew in that moment what she had been to me through all the years. She had believed in me when no one else believed. She had encouraged me when others laughed. She had gone through the days of poverty without a murmur. When success came it changed me, but it did not change her. Her charms multiplied with motherhood, and when the crisis came she held to God and would not let Him go until He had answered her prayers and had showed me where and how to find my health. And now in this hour when we knew that her prayers had been answered, I saw what it had cost her. I just picked her up in my arms and sat down in the big chair by the window and told her again as I had never told her before how much I loved her. And when I had told her all that a heart full of love can tell, I held her tight and whispered in her ear: 'Blessed is the man whose wife has loved him in the days of disaster.'

"I promised her there that pride and ambition should no longer control my life, but that all my work and play should be for her and her happiness.

"She turned her face up to mine. Her eyes were swimming in tears. I kissed her, but that was not what she wanted. She snuggled close to my ear and whispered: 'John, you are lovely

to me and I love you more than you will ever know, but from this day we must live for the Lord Jesus and to help people as He would have us help them. He has walked with me all these sad days, and it is He who has brought us the blessing.'

"We had the madman chained at last."

The doctor stopped a moment. No one spoke, and then he continued: "Gentlemen, these are the tragedies the doctors see—the world at war with sickness and disease."

He said no more.

We sat looking out over the waters. There was no comment, and one by one we separated for the night. I alone sat watching the glory of the heavens, and I said: "What a wonderful God is my Father. He pitches planets into space as the juggler pitches his balls, and loses never the least of them. Will He not also hold man in the hollow of His hand?"

THE HUNTERS

THE HUNTERS

My dear Margaret: Since I wrote you a month ago about Father's death I have been thinking of you many times a day; and now, as I look back over our lives to childhood, I see what you have been to me and I understand what an influence you have had, although you are younger than I.

The letter I wrote you contained only the story of Father's sickness and death. He wanted me with him every hour, and we talked much of you. I told you what courage he had when he knew he could not recover. He never complained. His faith was calm and strong to the last. There was only one thing he hoped for: he hoped that in some way the guides would find you on your summer tramp and bring you back. He did hunger to see you and kiss you good-by and to know that you were close to him, and he had a message from his strong heart to yours. He loved you, I think, more than he loved any of us. You always understood him and had such wonderful ways of soothing him when he was overworked and of comforting him when he was burdened with cares. I can remember now how his face

lighted when you talked to him, and many times his eyes shone with a film of tears when you impulsively threw your arms around his neck and kissed him. You were the child of his heart, but I never knew what that meant until in those last days when he and I were alone, for Mother was very weak and the doctor would not let her know of his serious condition until the last. During those days he pondered the things he wanted to tell you; and when he felt quite sure that you would not be found in time he took my hand in his and looked into my eyes a long while and said: "Donald, I am not going to be with you very long, and while I can think clearly I want to talk with you. You have been a good boy, and before I go I want you to know how much I have loved you since you were a mischievous baby!"

I could have thrown myself upon him and wept and begged his forgiveness for all the thoughtless things I have done and for all the worry and anxiety I have caused him, but instead I sat there numb and dumb, the tears running down my face and my heart bleeding within me. Then he told me how necessary it is for a man to hold to a few things in life. He told me how necessary it is for a man to be so truthful that no man can doubt him.

And that pure honesty is the foundation of courage.

And then chivalry toward women!

His mind seemed as clear as the morning, with not a business care to cloud it, and from the general talk he threw out these epigrams which will cling to me until I too shall become sleepy for the last long sleep:

"Truth is man's strength in the day of trouble."

"He who has dealt honestly has nothing to fear."

"Chivalry is the good brother—and every woman is his sister."

Then he told me the details of his affairs and gave me some advice concerning them. He seemed a little tired. He rested for many minutes, then he said: "Donald, there is one thing more: there is Margaret. What a daughter she has been to your mother and to me and what a sister to all of you! She is only a girl yet, but God has blessed her abundantly. What a woman she will be when she comes to maturity—charm of person, gifts of mind, and beauty; eyes and hair and color, with laughter sweeter than the music of birds singing at dawn. She is ours, but she is a woman—and men will hunger for her. Good men will love her and long for her, for love's sweet sake

to live their lives for her and to die for her with a smile. Evil men will devour her with their eyes and desire her for a day of lust, and because she is innocent how will she know the song of love which leads to life from the song of lust which leads to death? Donald, my boy, I can die without seeing her because I shall carry her image in my soul and look at her every day in the Kingdom of Heaven, but I cannot die until I know that she will know the danger of a maid with a man."

He rested a while.

"I shall never see her here," he said.

He waited again, then continued:

"I can never tell her, our blessed Margaret. You must do it for me, Donald, when I am gone. Think it all out. You are a young man. You know boys and men. You know the temptations and dangers which waylay innocence. Tell her all frankly, but don't frighten her and make her, in fear, hate all men. She has a brave heart, and if you can find the way to tell her she will understand. Pray over it, Donald."

Then he stopped again and looked at me searchingly.

"Are you sure you have found God, son?" he asked.

"Oh, I don't know, Father," I said. "There

are so many doubts and mysteries. I can't seem to find Him—for sure."

He looked again at me for a long time and his eyes had a wonderful smile, as if lighted by some light from heaven, then he said:

"In this message to Margaret we shall need God. You will need wisdom. You can't pray with much faith for guidance in giving my message to Margaret if you don't know Him yourself, Donald. There isn't much time for us. But I know God. He has been my friend for forty years, and I know Jesus, His Son, in many wonderful ways—and I think They will help me to help you in my last hour."

He looked at me again with that heavenly smile.

"We will trust Him," he said. "There is a verse in the Bible which you have heard all of your life. I am going to change it a little for you: 'For God so loved the world that he gave his only Begotten Son, that Donald Darwin, believing in Him, should not perish, but have Everlasting Life.' I want you to write this out on a card and keep it in your New Testament, and every morning and every night take it out and read it and pray to God to show you how to accept that Great Love which He has offered to you.

"And remember this, Donald: Day after to-

morrow, when you are all at the cemetery and they are letting this wornout body of mine into its grave, I shall not be there; I shall be going up to the throne of God to ask Him to help you to find Him and this love which He sent His Son to offer to you. Pray often. Pray and believe. Make Jesus your daily companion, and when the whole world seems arrayed against you He will be your Wonderful Friend. He will never leave you nor forsake you, and when you find yourself right with God, then talk to Him about your message to Margaret."

Margaret, can you see the scene in the old front bedroom which I am describing to you? I could stand no more, and I threw my hands over his shoulders and buried my face on his breast and sobbed my heart out. He said nothing at all for a long while. He just embraced me and held me as close as his tired arms could clasp, and when my grief had spent itself a little he began to soothe me, and at last these words got through my grief: "Some day you will understand, Donald, that death is the most blessed thing a Loving God has kept in store for His children, and when I am gone do not weep, but smile with a glad heart and know that I shall be waiting for every one of you, for 'In My Father's House are many mansions.' "

After that a strange peace came over me, and when we let the body into the grave there was not a tear in my eye, for I said: "Father is not here. He is walking up to the Throne of God to ask the Lord God Omnipotent to help me to accept the love which has been offered to me."

That was a month ago, Margaret, and every day the card with the Courage Verse has been taken out and read and I have prayed over it. I don't know when the change came. It must have been during the first days of the reading, for my soul found peace and my whole being has hungered for God, and I have not mourned Father's death. Somehow I feel the rarest glow of happiness over it, and he is closer to me than he ever was when living.

This peace which has come to me has been so wonderful that I have feared it might not be lasting, and I have let the days go by so that I might be sure before I should write you all the things which are in my heart. And each day I have prayed for wisdom, that in telling you these things I may tell them to bless you as Father would have, if he had been here to hold you in his arms and pillow your head on his shoulder as I have seen him do a hundred times.

Margaret, what a strange thing is life, with its simple duties which we perform from day to day in supplying food, clothing, and shelter for

our comfort. These are the simple acts. About them there is no mystery. Our hunger demands that we prepare food; our discomfort requires preparation of clothing and the storms warn us to provide shelter. But there are other things which are not so simple: those visions and dreams which illumine the human mind and build the Beacon Fires of the world and then those lesser lights which are neither sun nor moon, but which beam steadily in the mind and give us our intelligence and sanity.

Then there is Love, which glows like a fire in the grate to fill all the house with comfort; to soothe the suffering; to bring consolation to those in sorrow; to serve the weak and to count sacrifice as the greatest joy; or that other rarer Love which sweeps the soul like a conflagration and finds its glory in giving, giving, giving, forever giving of itself to bless those upon whom it falls, as the sun in the heavens gives itself to all the earth to make it yield the blossoms and the harvest.

And then that other mystery which we call Passion, so closely intermingled with love, and which holds somewhere within its mysterious powers the life-giving secret which multiplies and replenishes the earth with its peoples and scorns the ravages and devastation of death, until the children of men cover the earth as the

waters cover the sea. Without it we would be man and woman, but through it man becomes a father and produces after his kind—and woman! God alone knows what comes to woman when she feels the child of her love for her mate swinging in the hammock beneath her heart. For her there is no sun by day nor stars by night, but her child is the Light of the World. For it she goes through the Valley of Shadows. For it she suffers agonies which no language can describe. For it she lives and moves and has her being. For it she lays down her life and counts it her greatest joy if the need calls, for she has become a mother and God has crowned her with the crown of the Matchless Queen because she has brought another life into the world. And from that day she is no longer a woman. She is Mother, and wherever she abides, in the wilderness or on the throne, is the shrine where men come to kneel and pay their tribute. The hunted, hiding in their dark lairs, would die for her. The good would stain their hands in blood to defend her, for she is the sacred priestess of the world who feeds the altar fires of love as long as her child lives. One pauses to inquire which is the greater miracle, the birth of the babe or the birth of motherhood when the babe is born. These things: home,

children, the mother, the father, glorify love and sanctify passion.

But this thing, Passion, when loosed and unrestrained, becomes a monster. When it breaks away from the purposes of God and the better instincts of men it is a beast, more ruthless than any beast of the jungle. It comes to youth in the days of immaturity when self-control and ideals have not been developed. What it does in the life of a girl I do not know. But in the boy it storms the very citadel of character and manhood. It surges like the tides of the sea and no one escapes it. There is no time in his whole life when he so needs the companionship of clean men, the frank encouragement of his father and the sweet understanding of his mother. More and more parents are coming to see it, but even now this glow of the senses which fills the boy in his boyhood is ignored or forbidden in conversation, and he fights it alone or is drawn into a maelstrom where self-control is swept away and then that thing which was meant to bless the earth becomes the destroying monster, which fathers and mothers who have daughters fear more than they fear disease, or accidents, or pestilence, or death. Its prey is innocence and beauty. Girls and women are fed to it, yet its appetite is never sated.

There are many men whose reverence for woman or whose faith in God gives them strength to conquer, but there are many who believe that women are fair game to be hunted. They have all the weapons of love to hunt with. They develop skill in the use of them, and the innocent, hungry for love as women are, often fall victims, and even when these Hunters do not accomplish their purpose they often leave wreckage behind them in young women whose loves have been shattered and whose confidence in the decency of men is destroyed.

Sister, will you understand me when you read these lines, or will you resent my frankness and charge me with a loss of confidence in you? It is not a lack of confidence in you, but a knowledge of the Hunters and the prey they pursue.

Yours is a nature which drinks so deeply of life that I know you will drink deeply of Love, and my prayer is that you may find the spring which sends forth the Waters of Joy, for there are such springs in the Garden of Love, where the world is shut out and Love is shut in.

We get into the habit of thinking that only girls of coarse natures are tempted and only men of the low breed are dangerous. But we men know that the Hunters pick their prey from every class.

A few months ago a man famous on two continents passed through our town. My employer has known him from boyhood. He met him at the train. They talked as boys talk when each knows the heart of the other. This man of fame, whose voice has thundered around the world, was fleeing with his daughter. She had become infatuated with the degenerate son of an old family. He had a strange influence upon her, and when in the same city with him she seemed to lose control of her better self. She begged her father to take her away. They were gone for three months. When they returned the Hunter was waiting for her. She was appalled at the influence he still had upon her. She went to her father and said: "Father, if he ever asks me to marry him again I'm going to consent. I don't think he wants me for a wife, but there will be less disgrace for me to marry than to ruin your influence in the world the other way."

When she had gone to her room the Great Man locked his door, and talked to God about it. All afternoon he struggled, and as the gloom began to gather he looked into the face of his Master and said: "Thou gavest me a daughter. She is mine and I will protect my own."

He went to his closet and took down a six-shooter and cleaned and loaded it, then went

out into the night. The wind blew and the snow beat upon him, but he knew of no storm but the storm within his heart. He went to the house of the Hunter and was admitted, and when the two men were alone the Great Man said to the Hunter, "What is your intention toward my daughter?"

The Hunter smiled and replied, "We haven't got far enough yet to discuss that."

The Great Man quietly pulled the revolver from his pocket and said: "Your attitude is what I had expected. You will sign this statement now or I will kill you where you stand."

The smile faded from the Hunter's face. He glanced at the weapon, then looked into the burning eyes, and signed the paper.

"Listen," said the Great Man: "If you ever write a note to my daughter or stop to speak to her on the street I'll hunt you down as I would a mad dog among children."

He saved his daughter.

The philosophy of the Hunter is: Take all that is granted from women, and the more there is given the more despised is the giver.

A beautiful woman once told me her story in a strange way and a strange place. I had been in the city only a few weeks when one of the managers said to me: "There is going to be

a boxing match at the theatre tonight; would you like to go? I have a box."

I accepted his invitation. It was new to me. During the vaudeville beer was being passed among the audience. About ten-thirty the boxing was called. The boxers had hardly come on the stage when four stylishly dressed and beautiful women came into the box we occupied and paired off with us. One of the men ordered beer. All of them took it. I was embarrassed. I had never been in such company. The girl who sat next to me lifted her glass and looked at me over its rim, then she lowered it.

"Why do you look at me like that?" she asked.

Margaret, I don't know how I had looked, but I replied, "Because you ought not to be in a place like this."

"It is here or the grave for me," she said.

Then she told me how a man of fashion had come to her town. He had courted her and had promised to marry her. Her parents objected until she was older. She eloped with him. He refused to make her his wife, and deserted her.

I said: "Write to your father that you are going home. He will take you back."

"I wrote him," she said. "He replied that I was mistaken, that he had no daughter of my name."

"Oh! oh!" she exclaimed under her breath. "I did it all for love. I thought he loved me! I would have died for him. What nectar for some and poison for others is in the draught of Love!"

"Can't anything be done?" I asked. "No, there is nothing," she said. "It is this life for a while and then the grave. I shall sleep well because I shall be very weary."

There was nothing I could say. I got up and went out. But there is a sequel: I met her on the street last week. I think she knew me, but she was going to pass without speaking. I stopped her. "Have you any hope yet?" I asked.

"No, there is no hope," she replied. "A little longer and then the long sleep."

"There is another way. There is God," I said. She looked at me with level eyes. "Yes, there is God," she said. "He forgives. But while she is on the earth what can He do to wash away the stains of a stained woman?"

I am not thinking so much of you, Margaret, when I tell this story as I am of all the sisters of men. Can't there be a new Golden Rule for men to remember, to run something like this: "Do unto other men's sisters as ye would that other men should do unto yours"? It would be the Golden Shield for girls, would it not?

A while ago I asked a young woman how women know when the love which is offered is true love.

"Oh, their hearts tell them!" she replied.

But there is a better way to learn. Where any man would make advances which would:

Mar the modesty,
Coarsen the character,
Or challenge the chastity

of any woman, she may know that his heart is as black as his words are fair.

But when her lover comes, if she can look into his eyes and see that while his body glows, his soul glows stronger; that he would suffer that she might avoid suffering; that he would go through flames that she might escape them; that he would die himself or slay others to hold her name stainless; then, if she loves him, what happiness is theirs as they go hand in hand to drink of the Fountain of Pure Joy, for she is his, and he is hers, and she can trust him with herself and with all women, forever and forever!

Margaret, will you understand when you read my message? I have written because I love you. Father would have done it better. He would have made you understand with such simplicity that there would have been no blush. At first after he was gone it seemed to me I

could not write you of these things; then, because I love you, I wanted you to have the warning, and there is a little secret: each day when I prayed to God to show me how to accept the great love He had offered me, I asked him to help you to find the love of some great soul who will love you to madness, in return for the great gifts you will give to him. And as God has answered my prayer and has blessed me and become my Friend, so He will bless you also when the great soul comes and looks into your eyes. You will know him and will put your hand in his and he will lead you away, for you are his and he is yours, and he will take you home where great trees will cast their shadows at the gate and sweet-scented flowers will climb above the door, and you will find Life and find it more abundantly. And there you and your great soul will dwell together, and the Love which is divine and the Passion which is human will melt into one, and some day you will hear a new song, and you will listen and wait and listen and you will say, "It sounds like the song of angels," but it is the child tuning your soul to motherhood. And then, Margaret, you will go out into that dark strange country where women go alone, that the child may live, and when you come back and open your eyes and see the child asleep on

your breast you will say "my baby," and you will look up and see the great soul, its father. A wonderful glow of love for him will surge through you and you will know what Home is. And in those days I want to see you when God has come to you, and has laid His hand upon you and blessed you with motherhood.

And what a mother you will be, Margaret, when this new life comes to fill your home with joy! Oh, but there will be other things too: There will be anxiety and faith and fear and courage; and horror and hope; and health and sickness; and laughter and tears, and after a while death. But there will be love, Margaret, great love, and love never faileth, and you will love to the end because you are a mother. And, Margaret, if the great soul has not found God, take the sacred verse and write his name therein, and have him kneel with you, and pray that he may find the Great Love which God sent His Son to bring to him. And when that time comes Father will know, and will go again to the Throne of God and ask God to help you as he asked Him to help me.

Margaret, this is the message which Father has sent from his great heart to yours, but how shall we warn the sisters of men to thwart *the Hunters*, *the Hunters*, *the Hunters* who ravage the folds of innocence?

THE GARDENS OF HEAVEN

THE GARDENS OF HEAVEN

MY grandfather was a hard-headed Englishman, who through industry and thrift had saved a few thousand dollars and he knew how to keep them, too. We used to call him wealthy in our unpretentious circle, and the greatest mystery we knew of as boys was the mystery of how he had made his money. Well, one day he told us without knowing that he had told us, and I heard what he said and never knew it was the secret which we boys coveted above all things.

He was hitching up his old dappled gray horse, Major, when we gathered around to learn where he was going.

"I am going to gather some wild blackberries for your mother," he told us.

We begged to go with him, for that meant a ride in his spring wagon with maybe an opportunity to drive Major a little of the way, and a scramble through the woods, and a swing on the grape-vine swing which hung out over the creek, and a swim, and maybe a chance to slide stark naked down the slippery bank and splash into the "deepest hole" among the minnows and catfish. And then there always was the chance

that we might "kick out" a cotton tail or a 'possum or hedge-hog or a pole-cat, only that was not what we called him.

At first grandfather would not listen to our appeals, but hanging to his trousers and clinging to the straps of the harness we persuaded him to consent on this condition: "I am going to take you boys along if you will promise to pick berries for an hour and each one of you must promise to *stay with your own bush.*"

Of course we promised. We would have promised anything. We scrambled into the wagon and were gone.

When we arrived at the patch, grandfather selected bushes for each and we kept our promise as long as the berries tasted good, and then we began to ramble from bush to bush. Not one of us stayed with his own bush excepting Margaret, who was one of the boys in those days.

At the end of an hour we heard grandfather's "Halloo" and came back to the wagon where we found that Margaret had filled her pail from the bushes assigned to her. She had as many berries as all the rest of us combined and then it was that grandfather gave us this bit of wisdom:

"Now look at what Margaret has done. She stayed with her own bush and has got more

berries than the five of you boys and she is only a girl and wears dresses. I wonder, will you ever learn this bit of sense: It's the mother robin that stays at home that raises the baby robins; it's the farmer who stays in his own fields that fills his cribs and bins; it's the boy who stays with his own bush who gets the berries." And then he unconsciously dropped into the brogue of his own country: "*Thoo ud better remember this the longest day of thoo lives or thoo ul be sorry: that if thoo ud eat beefsteak and brown gravy i'stead o' fat pork and grease when thoo is as aud as I be, thoo ul learn to stay with thoo own bush.*"

And this after all is the profoundest philosophy of business, and it is by this method that men through the years of thrift and prudence make sufficient money for their living and buy their homes and maybe a few farms, or lay their savings away in banks or in good mortgages and bonds. These are the men who know where every dollar has been made, how hard it has been to get each one and how long it has taken to accumulate what they have saved. Often when the money has been made they feel that they would like to have it bring them some pleasure, but they cannot explore the fashionable pleasure grounds and yet "stay with their own bush," and they

do not want fashion anyway. They want a simple, wholesome pleasure which will warm their lives like the Old Swimming Pool of boyhood, or the spring which bubbled up through the sands in the shade of the spreading walnut tree. They know that if they could find something like that they would never grow old, but no one has shown them how to secure pleasures except through the most foolish and extravagant waste of money which it has taken years to accumulate, and when they have tasted of the pleasures offered they prove not to be pleasant to the taste. Only here and there some man will find the secret by accident, and yet there are ten thousand men in America who would give much to feel again the delight of the Old Swimming Pool, in the days when they have made their competence, whether they are still young or in middle life or in old age—and so I am going to tell you how some friends of mine found such happiness.

I had gone out to my friend's home to rest, for I was tired from months of constant toil. His house was simple and unpretentious. His furniture was not modern, but was heavy and substantial, and the chairs were made to fit the body. The table was delicious, and Mrs. Cotton was a mother to everybody who came under her roof.

They were just in middle life and had had two children, both girls. One of them was married, and the other one had died at twenty. No one knew just what Dan was worth, but as we drove around the country we would stop here and there where he would talk with men who were his renters and I noticed that each farm was a choice piece of land, and as the old intimacy came back he told me many things about his business and investments. He was a very busy man, but tried always to be at home by four o'clock. He seemed to have no pleasure but his business and a summer trip to the Northern Lakes in August. One evening we sat on the porch looking out over his beautiful lawn toward the town, and it seemed to me then that he had everything that a man could wish for and I said: "Dan, you have been immensely successful."

"You mean in money, I suppose," he replied. "Yes, I have made money, but after a man has enough to insure him against want, what does it amount to, unless he wants to go through the world and spend money like a gambler and get about the same results? That doesn't appeal to Alice or me."

"And yet it is money that swings the world," I said.

"No, it is not money which swings the world,

It is money that supplies bread and butter and clothing and shelter. There the usefulness of money stops. No man gets any more than that out of his money."

"That is a large part of life, though," I replied.

"No, that is just subsistence, it isn't life. It is only the material protection out of which life may develop. Life, that thing which steadies the world and lifts it, is made up of love and ideas. Money and commerce and business merely furnish the boarding house for life. Who ever heard of an immortal idea which has even the odor of money about it? Who ever heard of a divine, unselfish passion of consecrated love for the happiness of mankind that received its inspiration from business and commerce? Business is ruthless and no one knows it so well as the business man himself.

"No," he said, "I have never had a great idea in my life—not one that will be remembered for the good of the race twenty-four hours after they smooth the mound of my grave."

He waited awhile and said nothing. We listened to the strains of the piano just within the window.

"I have had a taste of love though," he said, nodding toward the window. "It is the most wonderful thing in the world. That was my one great achievement, when I won Alice."

He waited again and a film of tears shone in his eyes and his voice was husky when he continued:

"I can't think what the glory of love must be, to love mankind a thousand times more than I love Alice, as Jesus loved the world. I should think it would consume a man body and soul and prepare him for the mad-house."

"It might," I replied, "only that love is the source of sanity. Love is the sanest thing in the world."

"That is true of the home. It is the subtlest, sweetest, safest, sanest, divinest thing that ever touched the life of man and woman, and a man ought not to complain very much when God has given him that, and I am not going to complain," he said. "But—but I would like just one taste of something big—if Alice could share it with me—which would make the soul glow with the tenderness and passion which the saviours of men have felt. I know we are too old now to get very much of it, but just a taste would sweeten up all the rest of our lives."

"You mean that you would like to help some one by furnishing the strength for his weakness, by being a kind of saviour?" I asked.

"Yes," he said.

"Sure you can," I told him. "I can find you a hundred who need you."

"I suppose you mean money again," he said. "That is no good. I have chances of that kind every day. That only destroys the independence of those you help. It steals away their self-reliance and originality and initiative and makes them helpless in body and paupers in practice. There is nothing about money which can buy the thing I am thinking of."

"Yes, there is," I replied. "I have in mind right now a young fellow who has weak lungs. He is not incurable, but his mother has no money to give him the training which will develop him. He needs a sleeping porch where he can sleep out of doors, and he ought to have training under a physical director. The doctor says he can be cured in that way."

We talked it over and finally Dan said: "All right, my friend, get what he needs and draw on me, and some time I should like to see him."

The doctor's prescription did the business, and within a year his outdoor sleeping and his gymnasium work put him on his feet. When he began to grow strong he got back to work again and the thing he was most anxious to do was to pay the money to the good people who had saved his life. I told him that I had not advanced it and that my friend would not allow his name to be used, but at the end of

the year during vacation I took him out to the Cotton house.

He was a boy to admire, and when they knew him, Dan and Alice were as proud of him as if he had been their own son. He told them he had brought the money to pay them with interest. They scoffed at the idea, but he counted out the money for the principal and then the interest.

"Why," he said, "I couldn't use your money. It has saved my life and my mother's happiness. It was a messenger straight from God in answer to prayer. My mother had prayed for three months that there might be some way by which the doctor's advice could be complied with and then our friend walked into our house with the money. Now I am sound as a nut and by taking care of myself shall be able to live a long life and do a man's work. And it did more than that," he said. "I had become despondent, didn't have any faith in my mother's prayers and had stopped praying myself. I was just waiting for disease to weaken me and death to strike, and at times I contemplated helping it along. I had become a cynic and an infidel and then when the help came and I began to get my strength back, I felt as if God had come to me in the cool of the day and had put His arm around me, and that He

had made His face to shine upon me. I can remember that tender feeling which came to me one evening when I was returning from church and I saw how wonderful were the ways and the works of the Good God. I saw how my life had been filled with love by the prayers of my mother and the money which God told you to send us. He seemed to be walking with me holding my hand in His and filling all my being with His Glory, and I looked up at the stars and beyond them and repeated:

" 'The Lord is my Shepherd; I shall not want.
He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: He leadeth me beside the still waters.
He restoreth my soul: He leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake.
Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; for Thou art with me; Thy rod and Thy staff they comfort me.
Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies; Thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over.
Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.'

"Then His love flowed over me and covered me as the waters cover the sea, and I seemed to look into His eyes, and I said: 'And now, Oh

God, I will follow You all the days of my life and I shall be your son and You will be my Father.' "

After awhile the young man left to catch his train, and such a farewell I have never seen. He came forward to shake hands with Mrs. Cotton; she did not take his hand, but just went up to him and hugged him and kissed him on the lips. Dan and I followed him to the gate and bade him good-by.

When we returned, Mrs. Cotton was waiting for us and as soon as we were within the doors she cried like a child. She hid her face on her husband's shoulder and sobbed: "Oh, Dan, I didn't know a little money put in the right place could give such a blessing as that, and I didn't know that it could buy such joy as it has brought to us. Why, why, it is as sweet as the Gardens of Heaven."

When she had gone out, Dan gripped my hand in his and said: "It fills one's soul with a wonderful joy. Can't we do it again somewhere? When I can do a thing like that I shall feel that I am playing jokes on the devil."

"Yes," I said to him, "you can do it again there. The boy wants to study for the ministry and means to work his way through. But don't spoil him, Dan, let him go until he needs the help. There will be others."

That was ten years ago and the young man is telling the love stories of the Gospel.

I went home feeling quite happy. My little errand as the middle-man had brought happiness to four people. I could not tell how much more it promised to bring in the future.

A few weeks later I had a letter from Dan. He said: "Come out and spend Sunday with us. We want to talk to you. Alice is getting hungry for another excursion in 'The Gardens of Heaven,' as she calls it." And so I went out.

They didn't say a thing about what was in their minds until after dinner, when Mrs. Cotton said: "I am going to take a nap for an hour; I wish you men would, too. Dan always does when we are alone, and then we can talk and feel fresh and rested and bright and natural."

Just at three o'clock we came out on the porch and Dan said: "Say, Mac, Alice and I have had so much pleasure from our little journey into the Kingdom of Kindness that we should like to arrange for another. Do you know of the right thing?"

"And, Mr. Mac," Mrs. Cotton interrupted, "we should like, not only to help people to be prosperous, but to be useful in such a natural way that they will be happy too."

"I think I know the family you could help," I said, "but they are very sensitive. An offer

"Looking wistfully at a piece of low pasture land just over her fence"

of charity would offend them. They live up the road here about twenty miles. The mother is a widow. She has five boys and two girls, and each boy as he is old enough goes out to work among the farmers. She is worried because the boys must leave home so young and it doesn't seem as if they could hope for even a common school education. When I was there a few days ago, I saw her looking wistfully at a piece of low pasture land just over her fence.

"There is a lot of grass going to waste there," I said. "Why," she replied, "if that grass were manufactured into milk and butter, it would keep and educate my family and my boys would be at home. I have tried to get the money to buy the cows, but I haven't any security."

"Now, Dan, your judgment would be much better than mine. She is a fine little woman, and is worth any encouragement we could give, but we shall have to be careful."

I didn't want to make my case too strong; I wanted them to work it out for themselves.

So the next morning we took his car and ran up to look the situation over quietly. On the way we stopped at two farms, where the widow's boys were at work. They were too small to be away from home among strangers; one was thirteen and the other was fifteen.

Dan talked with the farmers about the boys and their habits. He seemed to be satisfied with the reports. He wanted to look at the land before he saw the mother. We drove around it and then went into the field and drove over it, except the timbered part. Dan didn't guess at that; he got out and Mrs. Cotton went with him. They walked through the timber until they knew just how much there was and how it lay. They drove into town to learn what it could be bought for, and then we went out to see the little woman who was worrying about her boys. She knew a good deal about farming. Her father had been a farmer. She had taught school before she married. I told her that Dan would buy the land if he could lease it for a while, and that I had brought him to see her. At first her face brightened and then all the joy went out of it.

"Oh, but I couldn't lease it, I have no cows, and it is only pasture land," she said.

"How many cows would it pasture?" Dan asked.

"During good grass years it would furnish pasture and winter hay for about thirty, but during a poor year for not more than twenty, and of course one would not dare to keep more than the minimum."

That pleased Dan, and he talked with her

about her plans. While she did not have specific knowledge about everything, she had a fine, sane mind. He didn't like to make her decide. He wanted her to think it over well. So we drove away. I was disappointed, and so was Mrs. Cotton. She had fallen in love with the little widow at sight and wanted to do anything she wanted. We went back by way of the town, and Dan took an option on the land for ten days. Meantime he and Alice saw her again, and everything was arranged. He bought the land. She leased it and he bought twenty Durham cows for her.

And wasn't she the wise little woman!

She didn't say, "And now we are rich, let us eat, drink, and be wasteful." She didn't bring the boys home that were away. She let them "work their time out" and she used the money they made to build stables for the cows and sheds for the hay. But when fall came they were all home and in school, and every morning at four-thirty the light shone from the kitchen window. The mother scalded and cooled the pans while the children milked, and they were taught that "stripping the cow dry" is what makes her give an abundance of milk and catches the richest cream. And when they had finished milking, they would come to the house with milk pails filled to the brim and heaped up

with the foam piled far above the top of the pails until they looked like pails of snow. When the milk was strained and the pans were placed in rows on the cool cellar floor, they all came in to breakfast.

After breakfast the mother reached up to the clock shelf and took down the Bible and read a short chapter. And then they all kneeled at their chairs while she prayed in her simple way that the good God would give her wisdom to be a father and mother to her boys and girls who had no father, and that above all things they might believe in Him and trust Him and grow to be such men and women as to honor Him in all things. And with tears in her voice she asked God to bless Mr. and Mrs. Daniel Cotton, who had helped her and her children to help themselves, and to fill their lives with the joy of a great love until that sad day when "one shall be taken and the other left" and then to bless them in their despair even more than in their joy. Then she went on with this beautiful petition: "Oh, Lord, the Father of all living things, remember our kind dumb friends, the kindly cows of the pasture that pull sweet grasses in the fields all day and distil their juices into milk and cream, and if there is any way to make them understand, teach us how to tell them that they are our friends and that

we love them. Give us knowledge of their natures and their ways, so that we may minister to their comfort and contentment, that their days with us may be days of peace. Show us how to be patient and kind to them as they are patient and kind to us in their simple and trustful way. Now, Father, keep my heart tender with a great love and fill my soul with sunshine to warm our blessed little home, but give me the iron will that cannot be broken until my task is finished."

What wonderful Durham cows those were! The boys and girls found the most astonishing things in their milk pails. They found not only milk and cream and butter, but loaves of bread and suits of clothes and shoes and dresses and ribbons and stockings and hats and gloves and winter coats and overcoats and table cloths and dishes and silverware, and then they found school books and diplomas and whole buckets full of ambition and happiness and honor. And they found another thing so large and heavy that you won't believe it ever came from a milk pail. They found a whole dairy farm in it; for one day, after milking six years, they made the last payment on the grass land and owned it. The cows had pulled enough sweet grass with their tongues and had made enough milk from it to keep the family

and pay for themselves and pay for the land which grew the grass.

Unless you have been very poor some time, you can never understand what an achievement this was for this family. They decided to celebrate the event. They had a supper and invited Dan and Mrs. Cotton. The table was charming with fresh linen and simple china and silverware, and the food was delicious, but there was something else at that table, not laid for the occasion, which made everybody laugh with tears in their eyes.

When Dan and Mrs. Cotton were about to leave, Albert opened the gate and let all the beautiful cows into the yard, and Mollie Durham, the oldest cow in the herd and the great milker and leader, led them to the back porch and asked for salt, and the little mother just threw her arms around Molly's neck and cried.

"Why, you dear old darling," she said, "you will never know what you have done for me and my children." And Mrs. Cotton is sure that Molly understood everything that was said to her, although Mrs. Cotton couldn't see very well at that time herself, while Dan turned away and used his handkerchief.

What wonderful milk the Durhams gave! Dan and Mrs. Cotton drank some of it, too, and it changed their lives. They wanted to

live in the Gardens of Heaven and they do most of the time. They are interested in every good thing, and now they give nearly all of their income to spread religion and build churches and hospitals and Associations and to support workers in many fields. They have had their taste of the Big Thing, and they have learned the joy of Loving the World, and they have found that money, too, has its mission in molding mankind.

Now if by chance you should wish to learn this joy that passes understanding, but don't know how, I think that I can tell you. Just drink a little Durham milk, sweetened with love—just a little plain Durham milk made from the sweet grasses of the pasture, and a little plain human love distilled from deeds of mercy and you shall learn of the wonderful flowers that bloom in the Gardens of Heaven.

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